

Flight of the Princess: An ROTG Fanfic

by jackfrostbeliever

Category: How to Train Your Dragon, Rise of the Guardians

Genre: Adventure, Friendship

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Jack Frost, Jamie, Man in the Moon

Status: Completed

Published: 2013-04-01 22:02:46

Updated: 2013-04-01 22:02:46

Packaged: 2016-04-26 14:48:05

Rating: K+

Chapters: 11

Words: 23,150

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: This is a sequel to the Princess Dorm. If you have not read that book, read it and then come back. For all the fans of all the movies crossed-over in this series. I hope you enjoy it.

1. Mickey's Castle

As you might remember from the last part, this is not the Princess Dorm anymore. This is now the Flight of the Princess. It's not just me that's having a flight, so is Kida and Merida and Hiccup and Jack. That's everyone though. Nobody else needed to come. We wanted Rapunzel to come with us, but she wanted to stay with Eugene. She also thought that she didn't need to go too. As a matter of fact, Kida and Merida and Hiccup didn't even need to go. Where were we going? To freaking Mickey Mouse's castle. I didn't even believe in that guy until yesterday morning. Yesterday was Christmas too. We didn't even get to stay inside for the day; Kida made us realize that we had a war to finish, and if we had all stayed inside, we'd still be fighting.

We decided to just have a little fun with it. Kida could teleport, but only to a certain distance, and Mickey's castle was too far for her to just teleport to. Jack and I could both fly, Hiccup had a dragon, and Merida had a really fast horse, so we decided to race there. Hiccup got there first, and then it was me, followed shortly by Jack. Kida arrived not much later and Merida was last.

"No fair! You all had help!" said Merida.

"So did you!" I insisted.

"Yes. A horse. Three of you flew here, one of you teleported. One of the flyers had a dragon. I just had a horse."

"True, but the competition still stands." said Kida. She pushed Hiccup in front of the door. "He will have the honor of telling

Mickey why we're at his castle. That and he will also have to beg for Mickey's help."

"What? I don't want to go in there! Not alone!" said Hiccup, nervous to the point of shaking.

"You won't be going in alone. You just have to do the talking." said Jack, pushing him forward even more.

Hiccup just stood standing in front of the door, shaking and moaning. "Guys, don't make me do this."

"Move out of the way, you daft old gammy!" said Merida. She marched over and swept him behind her. She knocked firmly, one of those knocks that you can't ignore, no matter what.

Moments later, the door opened. When we got a look at who opened it, I gasped. It was a humanoid thing, only coming to about my thigh. I could tell that it was mostly mouse, because of the giant ears on top of its head.

"Is that Mickey?" I asked.

"No," said Kida. "This is Minnie."

I realized that it had a bow on its head and was wearing a matching pink dress and high heels. I pursed my lips together and looked up, like, "My bad!" Minnie laughed.

"So, what brings you here?" asked Minnie in a voice that I could not believe was hers.

"Our school was burned down by the hobogoblins. Kida knows why we're here, but I don't." said Merida.

"Oh, those nasty things! Are you all right?" asked Minnie.

"We are, but all of the students who didn't go to camp aren't. Nobody left the school alive but Kida. Also, some of the campers died, not too many though. We're good for the moment. But now we have nowhere to live." I replied.

"Oh, my! How many of you are there? Just the five of you?"

"Not even close. Thirty eight. Well, there was before all of those others died. Now there are nineteen. Not counting us." said Kida.

"I take it you five aren't going to stay here."

"What? Why wouldn't we?" I asked, stepping forward.

"There's another small matter I forgot to bring up before. I really should let Mickey tell you though. Come on in. He's having dinner with his friends. I'll summon your friends. I just need their names."

"Okay. Have a seat and write this down." I said. I made an ice chair and she sat down. She whipped out a notepad and pen and held it at the ready. "Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Mulan, Giselle, Jane, Alice, Ariel, Meg, Melody, Eric, Tarzan, Charlie, Phillip, Shang, Hercules,

Rapunzel, Eugene, Tiana, and Esmeralda."

"And could I get your names? I already have Merida and Kida, I don't have the other three."

"I'm Vanessa, this is Jack, and over there, that's Hiccup. Oh, and his dragon, Toothless and Merida's horse Angus." I answered.

"Okay, well head right on in and your friends should arrive shortly."

She went inside and pointed us down a big hallway, then scurried away. We kept on going down the hall. When we opened the door, we saw an enormous table, like, ridiculously long. What was sad was that only a couple of the chairs were being used and they were being used by animals. Not like regular animals, but humanoid. The mouse was clearly Mickey, and then there were two ducks and a dog. On the floor there was a dog, but a real dog. When they saw us, they welcomed us.

"I'm Mickey. What was it that you needed?" asked Mickey.

"Um, probably a few rooms for a little while. I couldn't say how long." said Merida.

Mickey stood up. He seemed to be taking us in. "Ah, Princess Kida of Atlantis. Princess Merida of Dun Broch. Mister Hiccup of Berk, and I can tell you brought with you your dragon Toothless. But I don't know either of you two." said Mickey, gesturing at Jack and I.

"I'm Jack Frost and this is Vanessa Frost." said Jack.

"Oh, I've heard about you Jack. But I've never heard of Miss Vanessa here. Is she your sister?"

"No, I'm not his sister. I'm his girlfriend. And I wasn't always Vanessa Frost. I've only been a Frost for about four days."

"Was your name still Vanessa before that?"

"Yes. My mother's name is Trisha, and I have stepsisters named Kirsty and Kayla."

"Oh, I remember you now! What happened to your pretty hair and eyes?"

"I fell through ice, but that's not even vaguely important right now. Help us."

"I'd be happy to help. I just don't know what kind of help you'd need. Magical? Medical? Emotional? Mental? Just some place to stay?"

"Yes! That's what we need! But it's not for us. It's for a bunch of our friends. You see, the hobogoblins burned down our school and attacked us at our camp. Only Kida left the school alive." said Hiccup. Merida looked over at him in shock. Normally he barely even talked to her, let alone a weird mouse guy.

"Well, I have room. But why not for you five?"

"Minnie said we had to do something, and that we had to talk to you about it." said Kida.

Mickey seemed to be a little bit confused. Then he seemed to realize what we were talking about. Good thing too, because we didn't even know what we were talking about. He opened his mouth to tell us something when the doors flew open and Minnie led our friends into the room.

"Here you are. Everyone's all here, safe and sound. But there was a boy with them that you didn't tell me to write down. His name is Milo."

"Milo who?" I asked.

"Milo Thatch. They refused to leave him, so I just brought him with me. He was insistent on seeing Kida."

Kida saw the guy and smiled a smile I hadn't seen since the king proposed to my mother. She ran over to him faster than I thought humanly possible and tackle hugged him. I'd never seen this kid or heard of him before, but Kida clearly knew him very well already.

"This is Milo. He came the day you guys left. I thought you died!" said Kida. (That last part was directed at Milo, not at us.)

"I thought you died! Well, as long as we're both okay. But I thought there would be more people from the Disney dorm." said Milo.

"There were. A lot of us died when we were fighting the hobgoblins."

"You fought the hobgoblins?"

"No! We fought the hobogoblins. There's another o in there." said Jack. I smacked him playfully. "What? I was just correcting him!"

"Yes, but unnecessarily. You knew what he meant!" I teased. He smiled and laughed a little. I turned to Mickey. "So, about the roomsâ€¦"

"You can have them. But I need to speak with Rapunzel and the rest of you that came here first." Rapunzel stared around, and then pointed to herself. "Yes, you Rapunzel. Nobody else here has the name Rapunzel. It's just you."

Minnie led all of the others upstairs, while I stared around at some tapestries on the wall. One was of a boy and a girl on an anchor. The boy had the girl in his arms, and he was wearing all green; green shoes, green tights, green tunic, green hat. The only thing about him that wasn't green was the red feather in his hat. His hair was brown and his eyes were blue. The girl's hair was also brown, but curly. She was wearing a blue dress and blue flats to match. They were smiling at each other as if they were laughing at an inside joke. I was so engrossed in the tapestry that I didn't notice Mickey and the others come up beside me. When Mickey finally said something, I jumped.

"Ah, Peter Pan and Wendy. Those were two true dreamers if I ever saw one." said Mickey. I jumped. He laughed, and so did everyone else, for that matter. "Oops, didn't mean to startle you!"

"Whenâ€¦ how long have you been standing there?" I demanded.

"About four minutes, but who's counting?" said Kida, laughing.

"They are fascinating, aren't they? Vanessa, I think you're going to like this news most of all. If you thought a tapestry of them was interesting, just wait until you meet them!" said Mickey.

"Wait, what? I was just looking at the thing, waiting for you guys to hurry up. And why are we meeting them? And where are they?" I asked.

"Take it easy, there's no reason to be nervous, and you don't have to lie to me to protect yourself. No one's going to judge you for liking a tapestry." said Mickey. This mouse guy knew everything, because that really was true, both of it. I was kind of nervous. "They're both on Neverland, and you're meeting them because that's where you have to go there. The hobogoblins and falling through ice and dying were just the beginning."

This guy was starting to creep me out. We hadn't even brought up how I'd become like this, but he just seemed to know everything. How old was this guy? How many other kids had he helped? How did he know all of this stuff? I would have asked him, but I needed to wait until we were in private.

"What is it that we have to do while we're in Neverland?" asked Rapunzel.

"Before we talk, you should all sit down and eat. You've had a hard time. I'll go whip something upâ€¦" Before he could finish, the door marked 'Staff only' flew open and Tiana came out with pizza galore.

"Sorry, Honey. I got there first. Y'all just grab a seat and I'll keep 'em comin' until you pass out." I knew she was kidding, but Mickey looked a little worried about the 'pass out' part.

We all sat, ate pizza, and told Mickey about our adventure; from the day I arrived at the school until when we opened the doors to this room. Mickey said nothing; he just sat there, nodding a few times. When we were finished, he faced away from us and stared having a conversation with nobody at all. We all stared at each other with 'what?' expressions on our faces. He finished up and looked back at us.

"So, you must all be wondering why it is you have to go to Neverland." We all nodded, slightly in shock. I dare you to sit in a room with a tiny little mouse person who was just talking to nobody and was then talking to you calmly, as if nothing happened. You wouldn't say anything either. "Well, it's for two reasons. They need your help, and you need theirs." Still nothing from us. "I bet you're wondering why." Silence. "What happened to you guys? You were all chatty and happy five minutes ago!"

"That was before you had a conversation with nothing." said Jack. I shot him a dirty look. He mouthed "What?"

"Oh, you mean Gerald. He's someone. Nobody else but me can see him."

"Uhâ€¦umâ€¦areâ€¦are youâ€¦uhâ€¦schizophrenic?" asked Hiccup.

"Probably. No, wait, forget that. Most definitely. I am most definitely schizophrenic." He didn't even seem ashamed or embarrassed to admit that. He said it as though we were talking about pizza toppings and not mental illnesses.

"So, why do we need their help? And why do they need all of our help?" asked Rapunzel.

"The answer to that is really quite simple. You are supposed to save the world."

2. Storytime

I sat on my bed that night with my head in my hands. How were we supposed to save the world? Jack had only saved the children of the world from fear. I couldn't think about me saving the world, or even going to Neverland. It wasn't even the same world as ours! Why did we need their help? I was way over thinking this. I dug under my bed for my bag and dug through that. While I was looking for my nightgown, I found the book I had gotten. I saw it and screamed. I dropped it on the floor. Why? Because the title wasn't 'Don't read this yet!' anymore. Now it was 'The Girl who Flew Away'. Jack came running into my room. He was poised for attacking.

"What happened?! What's wrong?!" he asked.

"Theâ€¦theâ€¦theâ€¦" was all I managed to get out.

"The what? Just spit it out!"

"The book!" I exclaimed, pointing.

Jack picked it up and inspected it. He flipped through the pages. He didn't appear to get it. He wrapped his arm around me and handed it to me. Then he noticed the title was different. His eyebrows knit together. Did I ever tell you how much I love it when he does that? He's cute when he's confused.

"Wasn't this called 'Don't read this yet!' earlier?" he asked.

"Yes. And it was blank. Which is actually weird. Why would North not want me to read this if it was blank?"

"I don't know. You should get some rest though." said Jack, making a move to open the door.

"Jack wait!" I shouted. He turned around, hand still on the doorknob. I smiled and held up the book. "Will you read it to me?"

"What? Why?"asked Jack.

"Why not? It's just a story." I made puppy dog eyes. He never could say no to my puppy dog eyes. He looked down and groaned. Then he walked over and took the book from me.

"Go get changed." he said in defeat. I kissed his cheek and grabbed a nightgown. When I was changed, I came back in. He was sitting on a chair beside the bed.

I climbed into the bed and snuggled down. I gestured for him to begin.

Once, there was a little girl. She lived very happily with her mother. One day, a king came along and married this girl's mother. The girl thought she was going to be very happy in the castle. She was shocked when she discovered that she wasn't. Her mother stopped spending time with her. She was always spending all of her time with the king. He didn't like the girl and decided that if he didn't put her in school soon, she was going to grow up to become some sort of criminal. So the girl sadly packed her bag, waved good bye to her mother one last time, and rode away on a train. She was also surprised to find that she actually liked the school. She had made a lot of friends there. It was only going to get better. The next day she found a boy that she liked. And the day after that, she found another boy that she liked even more. But she didn't know his name yet. She turned to her friend Alice.

"_What's his name, if you know it." she asked._

"_The frosty one is none other than Jack Frost." said Alice._

I didn't realized that this book was about me. That was my life. I didn't know it, but Jack must have known. I know now because of the knit of his eyebrows and the change of tone in his voice. But he kept reading. He said nothing.

_That day, she and Jack both had the same Magic class. Jack led her outside instead and they had a little fun in the snow. Then Jack told her about some things he had learned over his three hundred years. What he said made the girl cry. She was so moved inside that she kissed him. She'd loved him since he had kissed her cheek, but she was still denying it. Granted it wasn't really her choice to make. The man in the moon had to bring them together. They were meant for each other, he knew. But the girl ran away crying. She found the other boy that she liked, Derek, and he tried to ask her if she would go to a dance the next day with him. She refused to even let him finish his question. _

_She ran to her room, confused about what her heart wanted to do. She cried alone for a few minutes before Merida came to talk to her. The man in the moon wanted to help her, but he couldn't so long as she was crying. So he entered her mind and made her stop. She chose to face her troubles instead of hiding from them, which got the man in the moon interested in her as a potential Guardian. Even he himself had refused to face his troubles before, but she never had. She found out the other boy she had liked was now dead, killed by a hobogoblin. The man in the moon knew that the destiny he had planned for her would never come true if she didn't take this time to get to like Jack, so he filled her mind with good thoughts to keep the realization of that death from her mind. Everything worked out, until

he let his focus drop for a moment. That's when it hit the girl, the reality of the fact that Derek was gone. _

She ran outside to see Derek one last time, following the light of Rapunzel's hair. But it wasn't Rapunzel. It was a hobogoblin. She was attacked. The man and the moon told Jack and he ran to her rescue. Rapunzel healed her.

The following day, Jack and the girl played around in the snow again. Jack showed her how he became Jack Frost, something he'd never told anyone about before. That developed trust. When the girl cried after the story, something else the man in the moon had a hand in, Jack kissed her. Rapunzel saw and felt betrayed. Rapunzel ran back to her room and wondered what she should do. The man in the moon whispered in her ear the idea of leaving. She wrote a note to Merida and decided to go back to her tower. The girl read it and felt awful inside, but the man in the moon wouldn't let her feel it. She put on a smile and went to the dance with Jack. When she got back, she shredded the note so Merida's feelings wouldn't be hurt, another sign that she was meant to be a Guardian, and continued on with her life. Shortly after, they arrived at camp. Jack froze the lake, and it was actually very sturdy, none of it was thin. But the man in the moon knew that today was the day that the girl would become a Guardian. He thinned the ice in the middle because he knew they'd go there. Jack wouldn't have left his staff on the shore if the man in the moon hadn't forced him to. That way, he was guaranteed to be stuck. When they realized it, the girl proved her bravery by going to Jack despite how scared she really was.

_She made her way slowly back to the camp to get help and hit a thin part. She fell in. A piece of ice hit Jack's staff and would have broken it if the man in the moon hadn't moved it and made it seem as though the ice had hit it at an angle that made it go flying. When the man in the moon raised her from the ice, she wasn't believed in by anyone but Jack. But shortly they started to see her. _

They fought a war with the hobogoblins, and Jack and the girl won it. Many of their friends did not live to see the end. They made their way to Mickey's castle. He agreed to shelter them and told them that they were going to have to go to Neverland and save the world. When she went to her room and searched for a nightgown. She found instead the book that she had received for Christmas. The title had changed because the man in the moon knew it was time to tell her the truth, and give her a peek into her future. Jack read it to her as she slowly fell asleep. Before she did, Jack read; "Merry Christmas, Vanessa Frost."

That was where the story became my dream. I was standing on the edge of a cliff, a look of anger on my face. I was shocked to find that I was yelling at Jack.

"What does it matter to you if I have some fun for once?!" I yelled.

"You know that's not our problem here Vanessa! We only have four days left to prepare! Did you forget about all of our friends who are being held captive?! We don't have time for detours!" I had never seen Jack like this, so I myself was a little bit scared. Me in the dream just gave it right back to him.

"You know what I think?! I think you're just jealous! You are so jealous, it's unbelievable! If I was going out and having fun with you, you wouldn't care!"

"Vanessa, just believe me! We have no time for this!"

"You're asking me to believe in you?! After what you did?! Never again!"

"What are you saying?!"

"We're DONE Jack! We are done! I will NEVER believe in you again! As a matter of fact, you're not even real to me anymore!"

As soon as the words left my mouth, Jack disappeared. I looked around, still angry. When I didn't see him, I grunted in disgust and flew away into the night. I became Vanessa Frost, the girl who flew away.

3. Jack Frosting

Before we left the next day, we had a slight issue to take care of first. It was Jack's birthday. I knew when I woke up. How? Because Jack leaned over me and said so.

"It is?" I muttered sleepily. He nodded. I sat up and stretched, yawning.

If it was his birthday, then I would get up no matter what time it was. That time so happened to be five a.m. I groaned, but what's a girlfriend to do? I put on a smile no matter how badly I wanted to just roll over and go back to sleep.

Once I was dressed, we went downstairs to the kitchen to get some cake ready. We got to have a bit of a laugh before that. We found Tiana there, asleep, leaning on the mixer. We tried so hard not to laugh while we crammed her in the broom closet. We didn't want to wake her up.

I got the cake batter ready with a bit of help from Jack. He was nowhere to be found while I made the frosting. I wasn't sure if it tasted right, so I tracked him down and let him taste it.

"What was that?" asked Jack, dipping his finger in the bowl for more.

"It's frosting. Does it taste right?" I asked.

"I wouldn't know, I've never had it before. But I love it." said Jack, taking the bowl out of my hands and walked away with it.

I stared in shock at my empty hands for a minute. When I looked up, he was gone. Normally, I would have chased after him and teased him, but it was his birthday. I didn't know how old he was now, but if he'd never had frosting before, I figured let him have it. He was the one who was going to have a sugar hangover tomorrow, not me.

I got really angry by seven. I had made twelve more bowls of frosting. Every time one was done, Jack would come into the kitchen,

take it, and leave again. When I was done the thirteenth bowl, I waited for him to come for it. When he did, I asked him what he was planning on doing with it. His eyes lit up (whether from excitement or sugar shock, I'm still not sure) and he led me to the ballroom.

How he'd managed to cover all that space with only twelve bowls of frosting, I'll never know. It was everywhere, on the chandelier, in mountains on the floor covering the walls. I turned a circle, staring around uncomprehendingly. How? That was the only question in my mind. Suddenly, something gooey and sticky hit me in the back of the head. Then I realized what it must have been. I gagged at the thought of it. There was frosting in my hair!

I turned around and there was Jack, smiling as though this was the funniest thing he'd ever seen.

"Jack, that is disgusting! Do you know how long it's going to take me to get this out of my hair? And we have to leave today!" I groaned. Before I could make a move to leave, he nailed me right in the face with another one.

"I am Jack Frosting!" cried Jack as he rolled up two more.

I saw his eyes and knew right from the maniacal light behind them that he was on a sugar high. His first, no doubt. He just kept throwing them at me until I was forced to take cover. Tiana must have woken up because she came out the door that led into the kitchen. Jack nailed her as well. She ran to take cover with me.

"Sugar high?" she asked. I nodded. "Frosting?" I nodded again. "I know what to do. But we have to make it to the kitchen without being hit again."

That was harder said than done. Yes, I said harder said than done. It was easier to do it than to say it because the other girls came into the ballroom. He bombarded them and we made it to the kitchen while his attention was diverted. Once we were inside, Tiana got to work, mixing and pouring and stirring and cooling. When she was done, she had what looked like a ball of frosting in her hand.

"What is that?" I asked.

"To be honest, I'm still not sure. All I know is that if it gets in your mouth, you pass out instantly. That's the only way to come off of a sugar high. It's saved me from listening to constant jabbering more times than I can count. If you can get it into his mouth, we'll be home free."

"How long will he be asleep for?" I asked, taking the thing.

"Between twenty and twenty four hours. Rough estimate. He has a fast regeneratin' rate, so maybe less."

"What?" She had confused me.

"He might not be asleep for very long at all." She said it slowly, as though to a little child.

"But what if he is? We have to go somewhere today! How long would it take him to come off of it on his own?"

"About the same amount of time and that doesn't even include how long he'd be asleep for."

"Well, I guess this is our only chance of actually making it out of here today." I sighed and put my free hand on her shoulder. "If I don't come back in five minutesâ€¦"

"I should panic and run?"

"No. It means it worked and I'm washing my hair."

I
>bravely opened the door and walked into the ballroom. I flew up beside Jack. He turned to face me, poised to throw, but I held up my hands in surrender.<p>

"I came to help you. Here!" I said, squashing the thing into his mouth. Some actually went in. He wiped the rest off.

"What was..?" He passed out cold before he could finish his question. I caught him. He was surprisingly light for his size.

The other girls all ran squealing for their own separate bathrooms to get the frosting out of their hair. I carried Jack down to my room and threw him on the couch. I went into the shower to get all the frosting out of my hair. While I was in there, I figured it was safe to sing. No one was going to hear. I don't like singing in public, or even just around other people for that matter, not even now. I thought over which one it was that I should sing and chose my favorite song in the whole world.

Heart beats fast, colors and promises, how to be brave. How can I love when I'm afraid to fall? But watching you stand alone, all of my doubt suddenly goes away somehow. One step closer. I have died every day waiting for you. Darling don't be afraid, I have loved you for a thousand years. Love you for a thousand more. I heard a noise and stopped. I waited a minute and starting humming the song because it was an amazing song, but I didn't want anyone to hear me sing.

I hopped out of the shower, dried my hair, and got dressed. When I opened the door, lo and behold, there was Jack, not only awake, but standing and clapping. His eyes were normal, so I knew he wasn't all sugar high anymore. I blushed.

"Did you hear that?" I hissed.

"No," he said sarcastically. "I'm clapping because you opened the door."

I gave him a teasing shove, but hugged him so he knew I wasn't seriously angry with him.

"Tiana said you'd be out for at least a day, but I guess she forgot to factor in your stubbornness."

"Oh, so that's why you shoved that thing into my mouth. What was that anyways?"

"Nobody knows, not even Tiana."

"No, not that. I was eating frosting, a lot of frosting, and then everything went allâ€¦fuzzy."

"That is called a sugar high. It's what happens when you have too much sugar. The only cure is sleeping."

"Well, I'm not on a sugar high anymore."

"I know, and thank _God_ for that!"

Jack gagged. "I'm never eating frosting again."

"You say that now, but frosting is addictive. I used to eat cans of it when I was little. Every time I would finish one, I'd feel so sick that I would swear I'd never eat a lick of frosting again. I'd eat another can the next day."

"And your mother _let _you?" I nodded. "I retract my earlier statement about her being boring. She sounds awesome now."

"Only because she'd let you eat all the frosting you wanted, right?"

"Yep, pretty much."

"You're weird Jack."

"I'm weird? You have white hair and you're calling me weird?"

"You have white hair too, and you've had it longer."

"I only have it because I saved someone's life."

"I only have it because I saved your life, twice, I might add."

"I only remember you saving me once."

"The trolls? The ones who would have ripped your limbs off if I hadn't stepped in?"

"Oh, right. There was that."

We both laughed. We kissed and headed downstairs to clean the mess Jack had made. Once we were down there, we saw that it was already clean. Tiana, Rapunzel, Cinderella, and Giselle had gotten there first. I tried to apologize, but they shrugged it off.

"Don't sweat it. We had some fun cleaning up that big a mess. Didn't we, girls?" asked Cinderella. All of the other girls laughed that laugh that people laugh when there's an inside joke.

"Well, since there's nothing left to do until this afternoon, how about I teach you how to make a snow day?"

"What's the difference? Isn't it just a day when it snows that children so happen to have to go to school on?"

Everyone in the room gasped and stared at me in surprise. Giselle burst out into tears. Cinderella patted her on the back and glared daggers at me.

"Vanessa, there is a major difference. Imagine this; it's Friday. You have a math test you didn't study for. You look out the window and see that at least two feet of snow has fallen, preventing you from going to school. You and your friends get to go outside and have fun instead of going to school," said Jack. I still didn't get it, but I said nothing. "That's why I send snowstorms on school days, because I love to see the looks on children's faces when they realize that they don't have to go to school."

Jack led me down to a local village. Only one kid could see Jack and none of them could see me, so we got to work in peace. I started out with a small blizzard, just enough to block the roads. We both made it cold enough that none of the parents wanted their kids to walk to school all the way in the next town.

"Okay, now to start off the fun. Make a snowball and blow on it." I did so and it developed a new layer, blue and sparkly. I threw it at the little girl who could see Jack and she fell over, that's how hard I hit her.

She stood up, looking angry. Then the blue sparkles surrounded her eyes and she laughed.

"Okay, who threw that?" she asked with a laugh... When she got no reply, she whipped one at a boy.

"Josey Bryant, not fair!" said the boy.

"You threw first!" insisted Josey.

Soon they were all throwing snow balls. Jack laughed and threw a bunch of his own. He pulled me in next to him and we both joined in the fun.

"Free-for-all!" exclaimed Jack, throwing more.

I laughed. That's when I understood how truly awesome a snow day really was. Snow ball fights were better than any day at school. Any day, even one with a pizza party. I laughed and continued to throw as many snow balls as I could. Everything seemed to go away. All that seemed real was this snow ball fight right now. Before I knew it, all the children were running back to their houses to eat lunch.

"Oh my God! We're going to be late! We've got stuff to do today!" I exclaimed, dropping the snowball in my hand.

"And that is another use for a snow ball fight; it's a great time killer. But we do have to go." said Jack. Josey saw he was leaving and grabbed his arm.

"What about the snow day? Aren't you going to keep playing with us?" asked the kid.

"I really, really, really want to stay. Like, very badly. But I have to go to Neverland today and then later on save the world."

"Will you come back?"

"Maybe, I like this village. If I don't die, I'll come back. Just keep on believing in me, will you?"

She nodded energetically and ran back to her house. She was looking at Jack when she was running, so she slammed into the doorframe and fell in the snow. We were laughing so hard that we both fell over and didn't see her go inside. Once we had recovered, we flew back up to the castle again. Rapunzel, Merida, Kida, and Hiccup were all waiting in the main corridor with Mickey.

"Where were you?" asked Kida.

"Having a snow ball fight." I replied.

"Well, I hope you all have a fast and pleasant journey. One thing first. Since it has mysteriously started to snow," he stared at both of us. "You have been loaned a carriage by Cinderella. If you hook Toothless up to it, you should make good time. And your bags have already been packed and loaded into the carriage, so don't worry about that. I bid thee good bye, farewell, yadda, yadda, yadda. I'll see you in a little while."

He walked away before any of us could respond. We all shrugged and went out to the stables. Sure enough, there was Cinderella's white carriage waiting for us. The rest of us climbed in and waited while Merida and Hiccup hooked Toothless up to it. They climbed in the front and we were off. We hit some rough spots along the way and we arrived mostly beat up, except for me. What happened was that my bag was apparently opened and all of the stuff in it flew out and the others got beat up by my stuff. I was fine, but none of the others were.

Next, we had to find Peter and Wendy. Mickey hadn't told them we were coming and he hadn't warned us that they were going to be hiding. We found them, after three hours and a lot of wandering, underground of course. Rapunzel actually did when she fell down a hollow tree stump. I'm still not sure how that actually happened.

Then we had to convince them that we weren't enemies. They thought that we were spies sent by the pirates to earn their trust and find their hideout. It took a lot of explaining and convincing, five hours worth, if you can believe it, but they finally let us go.

"So Mickey sent you here to help us? He must think we're in pretty hot water to send you in." Peter said with his arms crossed.

"What's that supposed to mean?" I demanded, my arms crossed as well.

"Well, we can handle our own problems usually. If we need help, then something very terrible is about to happen."

4. Captain Hook

"Well, yeah. He said we're supposed to save the world. Something horrible has to happen before we can save the world from it," said

Hiccup, shocking all of us. He hardly ever talked.

They kept fighting, but I barely heard it. My head was spinning for no reason. I felt hot. I started breathing funny. I opened my mouth to say something and fainted straight away onto the dirt floor of the hideout. I didn't feel like I'd fainted, I was just transported somewhere else. I was sitting on a chair across from a man all dressed in white. He smiled at me and I felt calmer. Nothing like that had happened since the moon. The man had to be the man in the moon!

"Correct, although as a Guardian, you can call me Manny," said the man. The voice was the same voice that I'd heard that night at camp.

"Why am I here?" I asked.

"I have to explain something to you," said Manny, reaching out to grab my hands. I felt more calm and comforted. "You're wondering why I chose you. Why you can do exactly what Jack can do. Why you have to save the world."

I nodded, wanting him to go on again. He smiled again.

"Vanessa, every Guardian protects something valuable to childhood. Jack has fun, North takes wonder, Tooth protects memories, Sandy does dreams, Bunny covers hope, and I protect them all. You have something more special than that."

"I do? But..."

"You have strength, courage, determination, and friendship. But above all else, you have strength."

"I'm not strong."

"Yes you are. Strength is many things. You are strong enough to face your mistakes, strong enough to be a good friend, strong enough to believe, strong enough to fight your own battles. Before any child can believe in any of the Guardians, they must first believe in you. That is why you must save the world. You have only one ability at the moment, fun. But just wait. More will come."

He smiled at me one more time and I snapped back to reality, the place I was asleep. I wanted to stay asleep this time. I needed to think about what Manny had just told me. But I didn't get very long. My eyes flew open almost immediately. Apparently I was either dreaming or just subconsciously didn't want to stay in bed. Probably the latter. It was dark and everyone was sleeping in huddles all over the place, even Jack. He had to have been tucked out, because he normally sat up half the night. I wasn't tired enough to stay in bed, so I got up quietly. Come to think of it, I was actually the only one in a bed. Everyone else was either in a sleeping bag on the floor or in a hammock dangling from the ceiling.

I looked behind me and saw a light coming from behind one of the countless doors of the hideout. I heard muffled whispers from behind it. I padded my way across the dead pine needles that littered the floor and opened the door. Two pairs of blue eyes looked up at me, one pair pale, one darker. One boy and one girl sat on a pair of

chairs. The girl motioned for me to come in. I did so and shut the door behind me. They were both blond, but the boy's hair was lighter, and so were his eyes. They weren't like the other Lost Boys or Wendy or even like my friends and me. The girl's dress appeared to be made out of a leaf. The boy's whole outfit appeared to be made out of autumn leaves, his pants and over shirt maroon, his shirt pale yellow. The girl pointed up and I saw a hole in the roof. They had wings, the source of the glow, so we all flew up through it.

Once we'd landed at the top of a big tree they both sat comfortably on a thick tree limb. I had to hug the trunk to feel safe, whether I could fly or not.

"Hi, I'm Tinker Bell, and this is my brother Terence. We're fairies, as you could probably tell," said Tinker Bell. "If Tinker Bell feels like a mouthful to you, just call me Tink. Everyone else does."

"I'm Vâ€|" She didn't let me finish.

"Vanessa Frost. We know. Mickey sent us a letter. Terence lost it before we could show it to Peter."

"Oh, well that's unfortunate, I guess."

We laughed a little. We talked and talked and by the time the sun just barely started to come up, I knew everything about them and they knew everything about me, and why the others and I went to Mickey's castle in the first place.

"So, saving the world, huh? How are you going to manage that?" asked Terence.

"I'm not sure. Manny told me that he made me the Guardian of strength, so I guess that means I know what to do, somehow." I put my head in my hands and groaned. "Nope, I have no idea."

Tink reached out and touched my cheek in that comforting way that only girls can do. She looked at me with eyes that said 'It's gonna be alright.' I smiled back.

"Say, you guys can see me. Do you believe in me?"

"Yes, but not like that. We're like that too; only children can see us all the time. Adults only can if they believe in us," said Terence.

"We should head back. It's almost morning," said Tink.

We flew back into the hideout. They went back into their room and I flopped back down on my bed. It seemed like only seconds had passed before I heard a rooster crow. I sat bolt upright, wondering for how long they'd had the thing in here before I realized that it was no rooster making that noise, Peter was somehow doing that. Jack laughed at my expression. I got up and lined up with the others. It was a little bit strange, but they did that every morning, and there was actually no good reason for it. Peter dismissed us to get changed and eat up right after the last kid had fallen into the line.

"What was that yesterday? Were you overstressed or something?" asked Jack, putting his arm around me.

"No, that wasn't it. Manny wanted to talk to me."

"Who's Manny?" He actually seemed confused.

"You know, the man in the moon?"

"Oh, him! Continue."

I told Jack everything that Manny had told me and his eyebrows had knit together (did I ever tell you how much I love that?) by the end of it.

"He never explained that much to any of the other Guardians."

"Well, I'm a special case, I guess."

I was, kind of. He'd made me to be exactly like Jack, but I had to be able to do something else. In fact, he had outright said so himself. If children had to believe in me above all else, then I had to be able to do something else. Maybe not, but if I was so special, then probably.

"Okay, well, since all of you are here, we might as well put you to good use," said Peter. He tossed each of us a sword, except Jack, he didn't need one, and miraculously didn't take anyone's eye out. "We're fighting the pirates right now. You help us win this war, we'll help you whenever you need it."

That sounded like a fair enough deal. We left the hideout twenty minutes later, each of us camouflaged to look like a part of the foliage. We stayed down and watched the bay where the _Jolly Roger_ was sailing. They didn't appear to be doing anything worth fighting.

"What's the point of this?" asked Merida.

"I know they don't appear to be very evil, but wait until they see us," said Wendy. She had a British accent, like me. "They have absolutely no qualms about killing children."

We all turned toward the ship as we heard a loud _BOOM!_

"Scatter!" exclaimed Hiccup. We all dove left or right to avoid the cannonball that was hurtling towards us.

"What did I tell you?" asked Wendy, crouching down.

The cannonball hit a big tree behind us and it toppled over. We all drew our weapons and rushed for the cove where the pirates were disembarking from their ship. I was the last one to the fight because I saw what the others didn't. A whole bunch of pirates went around the sides with nets. They were catching mermaids and throwing them up onto the deck of the ship. I ran not towards the fight, but to a pirate capturing a mermaid with a pinky-orange tail and black ponytail. I cut off his peg leg and he stumbled, dropping the net and letting the mermaid escape. I saw her face and her smile for a minute and she winked. I knew her. She swam away and I stared after her for a minute. Then Rapunzel was pulling on my arm, leading me into the fight.

I'd never killed a person. I'd hardly killed anything but hobogoblins and trolls and one giant, but they weren't people. But when I saw Hiccup laying on the beach, eyes wide open in fear as the pirate with a hook and red hat and coat raised his sword, I ran forward with a blind, white rage. I swung my sword and the pirate fell. I saw blood and looked away. The fighting all around me stopped. The pirates looked from me to the body, the body to me, and then retreated to their ship in fear. The others from the Academy ran over to me, Merida to Hiccup. None of the others moved, they just stared in fear at the dead pirate.

"Are y'alright, Hiccup?" asked Merida. He nodded. She punched him in the arm. "That's for scarin' me witless, ya daft old gammy."

"Vanessa!" called a voice in the distance. Over in the bay, the mermaid I'd saved waved to me. I went over.

"Are you okay Melody?" I asked, wading into the ocean without thought. But she was definitely Melody. "And what are you doing here?"

"That's not important right now," said Melody, waving away my question.

"One more question. Why are you a mermaid?"

"I was always a mermaid. In water. But they took Ariel!"

"Ariel was here too?"

"Yes, we always come here. Our dad is King Triton. You know, the king of the whole ocean? They took the mermaids to find our treasure, but when they find out that they took the heir of the ocean, they are going to hold her for ransom."

"We'll get to that in just a moment Melody. I think those Neverland guys died standing up or something."

They'd not moved at all. I went over to them and waved my hand in front of Wendy's eyes. She didn't even blink.

"Yearsâ€¦" Peter said softly. "We've been fighting each other for years and neither of us has ever come close to even capturing each other. You'd only seen him for three seconds and you killed him."

"Why is that such a big deal? All I know is I killed some pirate guy!" I exclaimed.

"He's not just some pirate guy," said Tink. "He was Captain James Hook, the pirate who's been hunting Peter for decades, the pirate Peter cut the hand off of and fed to a crocodile."

Peter knelt down next to the body and seemed to be fixing it's hat, hair, and clothes.

"We have to bury him," said Peter.

"Peterâ€¦" Wendy began.

"Get digging Lost Boys!" insisted Peter.

They began immediately. Before I had blinked twice, they had a man-sized hole ready. Peter Picked Hook's body up and laid it softly down in the hole. Then the Lost Boys covered the hole back up just as quickly as they had opened it.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like for you to join me in a moment of silence," said Peter. "Join hands with me and let us all pray for the soul of the most formidable foe in the history of foes."

I bowed my head and reached my hands out to both sides. Jack took one, and Terence took the other one. In an instant we all held hands and stood in a circle around the hastily made grave of the fallen pirate. We bowed our heads and shared in the moment of silence. (Except for Melody, but she was silent with us.)

5. Ariel's Rescue

Later on that day, we decided to go after Ariel. The pirates wouldn't be bothering Peter and his Lost Boys anymore, so the war was considered over. They kept their promise of helping us whenever we needed it. First, we had to get a ship, to sail after them. After a long debate (we're talking to hours) we figured that we should probably just go out and look for one. It couldn't be too hard. It wasn't, as it turned out. We all boarded the ship we'd found and Peter immediately took to the wheel. Melody came with us because when she was out of the water, she had legs again.

"So, what are we doing here, exactly?" asked Melody.

"We're going after Ariel, like you insisted and is the right thing to do," I replied.

"But do you have a plan?"

"Ummâ€¦Why do people always ask _me _if I have a plan? I'm not the leader here, go ask Peter!"

She did, but not even he had a plan. I sat down below deck, waiting for us to get where we were going. Rapunzel came down with me and we both sat together.

"Ever since you showed up, it's been nothing but rush, rush, rush all the time," said Rapunzel with a laugh. "I mean, there was the Mist, Derek died, the kiss, the hobogoblins, the camp battle, everyone dying, Mickey's castle, Jack going all sugar high and now we're sailing off to rescue a bunch of mermaids. Is it just me, or is that a lot?"

"That is a lot. What about when you ran away?" I asked. We laughed together for a minute before I finally worked up the nerve to ask the question that had been bugging me ever since she'd come back. "Rapunzel, what _really _happened when you ran away?"

"I already told you." She saw my eyes and sighed. "All right, fine, I'll tell you the real story, but you had better not go running to

tell everyone about it."

"I won't, just get on with the story."

"Okay, keep your shirt on. When I got back, Mother was really angry with me."

"What for?" I interrupted.

"Because I wasn't actually allowed to leave. I ran away. If I hadn't I would have been stuck in that tower forever. Don't act all surprised, I'm not all murals and songs."

"I know, but still!"

"Shh! Do you want me to tell you or not? Okay, so she was mad at me and she insisted that I never again leave the tower and probably would have removed the window if it hadn't been impossible to do so. I listened to her for a few days because I was angry. I didn't want to go back to school and there was virtually nowhere else for me to go. I met Pascal, he's a chameleon, and he became my only friend. So after three days, I was just minding my own business, baking pies, when Eugene just climbs in through the window carrying a satchel. He freaked me out so much, I bonked him on the head with a frying pan and just stuffed him in my closet. Then I looked through his satchel. Inside was my crown and his wanted poster."

"HIS WANTED POSTER?!" I yelled so loud that they heard me above the deck and I gave Rapunzel a heart attack.

"Okay, you are taking this story much too seriously. Let me give you the fast version. I bribed Eugene into taking me to go see the lanterns, we had a few run-ins, we kind of fell in love, we saw the lanterns, the two guys Eugene had abandoned to the guards showed up, they tried to kidnap me, Mother showed up, she brought me home, I had a series of epiphanies, I realized that I was the kingdom's Lost Princess, I realized my mother had kidnapped me as a baby for my hair, I told Mother she couldn't use my hair anymore, she tied me up, Eugene came back, she threw him my hair, he climbed up, she stabbed him, I agreed to do whatever Mother wanted as long as she let me heal him, she did, he cut my hair off so I couldn't throw my life away, Mother crumbled to dust, Eugene died, one of my tears revived him, we kissed, we went to the castle, I got my real parents back, I found out about the hobogoblins, and we left for camp that very day."

She had said all that so fast, she had to catch her breath when she was over. I had understood her, but she had gone really fast. And not a moment too soon. We heard a bunch of clamoring and shouts coming from above. We both looked at each other and then ran straight above deck. We were sailing close enough to the Jolly Roger to throw ropes across and climb over. I frosted over the ropes and everyone looked at me like 'WTF?'

"Just leave it to me. I'll take care of it. Be right back," I flew onto the deck of the other ship and all the pirates fell to my feet, groveling.

"Give me the mermaids and nobody has to get hurt," I said in a menacing voice. They did so without argument.

When Ariel was on our ship, Melody ran over faster than humanely possible. It seems to me that almost all of my friends from school could run faster than was humanely possible. They held each other and cried for a few minutes. Then Melody held Ariel at arm's length and looked into her eyes.

"Are you all right? Did they hurt you?" asked Melody.

"No, I'm fine," she looked up at me. "Looks like you saved the day again Vanessa."

"I guess I did. I have a habit of saving people when they're in trouble," I laughed.

"We should head home and tell Dad," said Melody. She and Ariel stood up and jumped straight over the side. They were fine, of course, but it still gave me a heart attack. Then they poked their heads out of the water. "We'll tell Dad! Anytime you need a mermaid's help or anything under the sea, just call us!"

I had a tiny bit of difficulty hearing her, but I did, so it was all good. I waved and we sailed on. It turns out we were pretty far out to sea, so we had at least three hours of sailing to do.

"So, two missions accomplished in one day. We're getting good at this," said Jack. I turned around and there he was. "I mean, we killed Hook and saved Ariel, all in one day."

"What are you talking about, we? I did all of that single-handedly. None of you did anything," I said teasingly. He grabbed me with one arm and gave me a noogie with the other.

"Then maybe I'm just lucky. Nobody else gets to brag." We were both laughing by then and I broke free. "I mean, you're my girlfriend and you just did all that in one day."

"Yeah, I did. I do a lot of things," I laughed. Then I heard a soft whisper coming from above me. I smiled and looked back at Jack. "I can do this."

I spread my arms out to my sides and was surrounded by a bunch of sparkles. I gathered some of them up in my hands and I shaped them into some kind of toy. It was a teddy bear. The sparkles vanished and I handed it to Jack. He looked at me with a look of wonder, and that's when I realized that I had the ability to create wonder too. I could make toys! I felt so good, I just wanted to dance. I wanted to dance with all my friends.

"We should have a dance," I said suddenly. The look of wonder in Jack's eyes vanished.

"What? Why?" he asked, genuinely confused.

"Why not? We've been fighting almost nonstop ever since that hobogoblin attacked me at school. We need a break."

"I'm sorry; I just don't think we have the time for anything like that."

He handed me the bear and walked away. I looked down at it sadly and

it exploded into sparkles again.

"I'd have a dance with you," said a guy's voice behind me. I turned around. It was Terence. "It sounds like it would be a lot of fun."

We smiled. We split up and searched the ship for anything vaguely decoration-like. I searched for snacks. I found a big barrel of root beer and a few cakes. The cakes may have been extremely old, but they weren't stale or moldy, so I set them out and hoped they weren't poisoned or something. Terence found light and an old record player. Someone would have to turn the handle the whole time, but someone would do it. I made some lights (I can do that too, apparently) and we strung them around. We rounded up our friends and Kida agreed to turn the handle on the record player for us. Everyone else danced around. About halfway in, someone tapped on my shoulder. I turned around and Terence held his hand out to me. I laughed and took it. We danced together for a few songs. It was a lot of fun, but there was one important piece missing from it. That piece sat up in the robin's nest and watched the whole time. Can you guess what that piece was? Exactly.

6. Preparations and Seashell Bras

"Okay, now close your eyes and count to ten," I told Terence. He did it. "Okay, now you can open them again."

When he did, the beach we were standing on was covered with snow.

"That is amazing! How did you do that?" he asked in wonder.

"That's not the only thing I can do." I used the wonder sparkles to make a toy airplane that could fly on its own. Terence watched it go and smiled.

"That's amazing too! What was that?"

"Uhâ€¦ I'm not sure, actually. The man in the moon, Manny, he told me I could do a lot more than just that, so something."

We laughed and flopped down in the snow. Tink flew down and grabbed a handful of it and threw it in our eyes. She laughed while we grunted in pain and rubbed at our eyes.

"You should see your faces!" she said, rolling around in the snow, roaring with laughter.

I finally got all of the sand out of my eyes and I laughed a little too.

"Very funny Tink. Next time, try not to blind us," I said with a smile.

"I wasn't trying to blind you; I was trying to get your attention. I suppose I could have done it differently, but that way was funnier." She pointed out into the cove and I saw two familiar heads poking out of the water. I suppose I could've flown, but I'd seen Jack walk on water by freezing it before, and I kind of wanted to try it.

I ran out over the water. Melody and Ariel both waved and laughed when they saw me coming.

"Is there a problem?" I asked when I finally got to them.

"You could say that," said Melody. I sat down (On water! How cool is that?). "You see, there's a lot going on right now. I'm sure you know about the Bubble Ball?"

I nodded. The Bubble Ball is held once every five years and was traditionally hosted by the heir of Atlantica (Making this Ariel's third time going to the Bubble Ball, and possibly the second one she'd hosted).

"This is bigger this year. More guests, more conflicts we have to settle. My coronation could happen at any time now, so I have to show the people of the kingdom that I am worthy," said Ariel. "I hosted one when I was twelve, but everything was done by the servants then. I'm old enough now to plan my own parties, that's what dad says, and I trust him, so it has to be perfect this time. I need your help. You're not fighting a war or anything, are you? It's been a few days, so I was just wondering."

"No, it's just, how are we supposed to help you?" I asked. "The Bubble Ball isn't for a few days, and we'd have to be underwater to help you. We're not mermaids."

"Oh, that's all you're worried about?" said Melody. She held up a purple bottle with a cork. It had no label and I couldn't see what was in it. "This will turn your legs into a mermaid tail for two days. There's one day left to prepare, and the Bubble Ball is on the second. Which means you would not only be able to help us prepare, you could actually come too."

"Hmmm, well, how about I ask everyone." Then I thought. "Wait, there's no way on Earth you're going to want the Lost Boys there, right?"

"Oh, sweet Jesus, no! Everyone else though," said Ariel.

"But then who's going to watch the Lost Boys? You can't leave them alone for three seconds."

"Figure that out later. We'll wait."

I ran back out onto the beach. Tink and Terence were still waiting there.

"What was that all about?" asked Tink.

"They need our help to plan the Bubble Ball." I explained to them everything that Melody and Ariel had explained to me and they agreed to it.

Together we flew back to hideout and shared the news with everyone else. The Lost Boys got all excited until I told them Ariel didn't want them there. We all then argued about who would stay behind and watch them.

"This is getting ridiculous. Let's just draw names out of a hat!" said Hiccup. No one else had a better idea, so we just did that.

When Tootles, the littlest Lost Boy, pulled out Kida's name, she turned pale.

"Redraw? Please?" she begged.

"I'm sorry Kida, but that wouldn't be very fair, now would it?" I asked.

"Neither is leaving me alone with them!" she insisted.

In the end, we had to outrun her to the door and lock it behind us. She pounded on the door.

"Please don't leave me alone with them!" she cried. I almost opened the door again, but then I remembered that if I did that, I would be stuck watching them.

"Everybody run!" I exclaimed. We all made a break for it so that we wouldn't feel bad for her.

Once we were all on the beach, we sat with our feet in the water. Melody put a drop of the stuff on one of each of our feet. I was last. It didn't hurt; it was more like getting both of your legs stuffed into a really tight sack with two floppy things on the end. My tail was a pale blue. So was Jack's. And Wendy's. Rapunzel got light purple. Peter's was light green, and so was Tink's. Terence's was maroon. Merida's was dark green. Hiccup's was brown. All of the guys got to keep their normal shirts but all the girls got seashell bras. The girls were all mucho embarrassed.

"Do we get different shirts at some point?" asked Tink, crossing her arms over her chest. "This is kind of embarrassing."

"You get used to it, I promise," said Ariel. "C'mon!"

We all followed her. It was really slow going to get into the water, but we managed to, somehow.

"Come on, we've got to hurry!" exclaimed Melody.

We all swam through the ocean and all the way to the castle. It took my breath away (as much as anything can when you're underwater). It was made entirely of gold. Each room was illuminated by a giant magic pearl. It had about twenty towers, and none of the rooms had any windows, so that the mermaids and the fish that were their pets could swim in and out at will.

"It's beautiful," I said in awe.

"I know," said Melody, a smile lighting up her eyes. "You get to live here for two days too! First, we have a party to plan."

Ariel split us up into groups and gave us command over the servants to help us when we needed it. Terence, Melody and I were all on kitchen duty. Merida and Hiccup were in charge of decorations. Tink and Ariel would take care of the guest list, place settings, and

favours. Jack, Peter and Wendy would be taking care of the entertainment. Rapunzel was in charge of writing Ariel's speech and helping out with whatever was left over when she was done. I took my two friends and about three dozen servants and made my way to the kitchen. It had about sixty ovens, thirty fridges, and twelve ice cream makers. Also five separate pantries.

"Okay, so we have to make rolls, appetizers, soups, entrees, and a bunch of little finger foods and desserts. Drinks too, lots of those. Shirley Temples seem to be big this year, so about a hundred of those. Anything you want to make, but not seafood. I trust you knew that already. To your stations!" Melody commanded. The servants rushed off and Terence and I went over to Melody.

"So, where do we start?" asked Terence.

"Well, we have," Melody checked the guest list. "Seven hundred people coming to this. Not one of them has any food allergies, so the servants will make anything they want. We're in charge of the table rolls, and that is literally it."

"Just table rolls? That doesn't sound hard," I shrugged.

"That's a basket of no less than a dozen rolls for each table and we have one fifty tables with fourteen guests per table. You wanna do that math or should I?" asked Melody.

"You go ahead."

"That's six hundred
>rolls. Not to mention, we have to make the breads for the meals and appetizers and soups that need them."<p>

"Oh. So, not easy."

"Not even vaguely. This should take us the rest of the day and most of the entrees wont even be done cooking until tomorrow."

"We'd better get started then."

Somehow, we managed to make all the rolls and bread and baguettes and even a few puff pastries. It took the rest of the day, but we did it. Ariel and Tink had the final confirmations of the appearances of all seven hundred guests and were literally up to their knees in cutlery and place cards and mats. Merida and Hiccup had put out tablecloths and chair covers and were in the process of hanging smaller magical glowing pearls around the room. Rapunzel had finished the speech and had also managed to get a different centerpiece for each table. She'd also gotten a gargantuan disk of crystal and her group of servants had set it out on the dance floor, which was always a little lower than the rest of the room. It also sparkled in the light of the pearls and shone up its own rainbow lights.

"This is perfect!" said Ariel. Then she seemed to remember something. "Oh, right. There's only one problem left to address."

She swam over to a big set of double doors and threw them open. When they were open, we all saw six mermaids swimming around, yelling and arguing, pulling each other's hair and throwing things.

"Who are _they?_" I asked.

"Meet my incredibly annoying sisters. Or rather, I think right now you'll just be able to look at them. They're fighting, they don't stop. Their names are Alana, Areida, Anna, Alisha, Athena, and Alyssa."

"Wow. Melody, you're the only one whose name doesn't start with an A. I mean, imagine the whole royal family being introduced," said Jack, and he began to talk with a deep voice. "The King Alfred, Queen Annika, Princess Ariel, Princess Alana, Princess Areida, Princess Anna, Princess Alisha, Princess Athena, Princess Alyssa And Princess Melody."

He busted out laughing, and I did too. It was kind of funny, if you thought about it. For the moment, don't think about it. Think about it later.

"Merida's got this. Watch this," said Hiccup with a laugh.

"SHUT IT!" They all stopped where they stood, erm, floated. "It's all yours Ariel."

"Girls, these are my friends Jack, Vanessa, Merida, Hiccup, and Rapunzel."

"And we care why?" asked the one who looked youngest, Alyssa.

"Because she's Vanessa Frost," said Melody. Every mermaid in the room let go of what they were holding and stared at me.

"That can't be true," said Alyssa, a blank expression on her face. "Vanessa Frost is tooâ€¦stunning and amazing and spectacular and a million other wonderful things to be here."

"Umm, what? Did you just say that?" I asked. "You're myâ€¦fan?"

"You're not Vanessa Frost," insisted Alyssa. "If you were Vanessa you would be carrying a bow and a quiver of ice arrows. All badass, like that."

"Oh, so, like this?" I used the water around me to make a bow and ice arrows.

Alyssa fainted straight off. All of the others squealed and surrounded me, asking a billion questions.

"Calm down, and wait a sec, okay?" They all nodded. I turned to Ariel. "What was the problem?"

"These girls all hate the Bubble Ball and always put up a fuss and ruin it, every year."

"Well, I'm sure they won't mind coming this year, as a favor to me?"

They all practically fell over themselves, promising they would come, and behave and act like they actually wanted to be there. They all

swam off to go plan their outfits and hair. I laughed.

"I don't think you'll have to worry about them misbehaving this year," I said with a laugh.

Everyone else laughed along with me, in true friend fashion.

7. The Bubble Ball

The next morning, I opened my eyes groggily. Then I remembered that that was the day of the Bubble Ball. I guess I'd always secretly wanted to go to it, but there was the issue of breathing underwater. Now I could go. I sat bolt upright in the clam shell bed Tink and I had shared. There weren't enough rooms to fit all of us one to a room, so I was paired with Tink, Rapunzel with Merida, and Melody offered to share with Wendy. Terence was with Peter and Hiccup was with Jack.

I swam out of the bed, waking Tink up in the process.

"Get up; the Ball is in an hour! We don't have time to sleep in!" I was swishing around the room, giddy and laughing like a fool. I must have scared Tink a bit, because she just screamed and flopped back down, pulling the blanket firmly down over her head. Okay, so more than a bit.

I threw on a shawl and a pearl necklace and swam as fast as I could to the ballroom. Everyone was down there except Tink and the seven hundred other guests. The king was impressed. He was proud of Ariel and grateful for our help. Word had spread amazingly fast about the hobogoblin battle. The girls hadn't said anything to him, but he knew anyways.

"Vanessa Frost, it is truly an honor just to be sitting at a table with you," said Triton, shaking my hand.

"Well, you're the king of the ocean. I'm honored to be shaking your hand," I replied with a smile.

"I'm not going to be the king for much longer. I'm abdicating in favor of Ariel tonight. Don't tell her, I want it to be a surprise."

I kept my lips sealed and soon I was sitting at the head table with Ariel's family and all my friends. The food and drinks were all being enjoyed avidly and the band Jack and Peter and Wendy had put together was performing. They were spectacular. Many of the guests were dancing already, and Triton hadn't even spoken yet. Ariel had, and her speech had gone perfectly. Ariel's sisters were all behaving themselves and if they didn't want to be there, they could have fooled me. Then came the moment that Triton would announce the abdication to the other guests. He held up his hand and closed it into a fist. The band stopped playing and everyone dancing swam quickly back to their seats. He got up out of his chair and all eyes were on him.

"I have some good news for the kingdom of Atlantica and her subjects. I have ruled this kingdom for forty years, I have eight lovely daughters, and I have suffered the loss of my wife. A lot has

happened since my coronation and I have to do this now, tonight." He reached up onto his head and grabbed the crown on it. "Ariel?"

She swam to him, a look of confusion on her face. When she was next to him, he took her tiara off and lowered the crown onto her head. As he did so, it magically became a silver tiara set with pearls and diamonds and every other gem you can think of. She looked into his eyes and he smiled. She grinned so wide and turned to the guests.

"I present to you my daughter Ariel, Queen of Atlantica," said Triton. Ariel hugged him.

"I promise to be fair, impartial and exactly as my father was. We can address our issues and solve all of them diplomatically and without taking up all our resources. We can make Atlantica a better kingdom and I will do all that I can to make sure it happens. You won't regret this!" She turned to face the rest of us. "I'd like to thank my sisters for not disrupting the Ball like they normally do. I'd like to thank Terence and Vanessa and Melody and anyone else who helped make the food. I'd like to thank Merida and Hiccup and Rapunzel for decorating. I'd like to thank Rapunzel for writing my speech. I'd like to thank Peter and Jack and Wendy and the band for arranging and performing all this amazing music."

"Who's the heir now?" asked some random person from the crowd.

"Someone deserving. Melody, of course," replied Ariel. It was Melody's turn to nearly faint.

"Her? But the rules say either your oldest child or sibling!" complained one of Ariel's sisters, Alana, I think.

"Or the one most deserving, and that is you."

Ariel took her old tiara out of her father's hands and put it on Melody's head, which had nothing on it before that. She smiled up at her so big that it looked sorta like her face had split open. Then Ariel snapped and the band restarted their song. I laughed a wee bit and went to join everyone on the dance floor. How mermaids could dance, I'd never figure out. They managed though. I was dancing with Jack when they asked for someone to sing. He pushed me up.

"Jack, I am not singing here," I insisted.

"Sure you will," he replied.

"Nope, I'm not." I looked around and saw Wendy. She was a singer. "Wendy! Here!"

She came over and grabbed the mic. She started singing and I punched Jack on the arm.

"I DO NOT sing in public," I said.

"Okay, okay, fine!"

The Ball was over before I knew it. Also, the elixir thingy ran out as soon as it ended. We all went back up to the beach with Melody.

The guys all got their regular pants back when they got their legs back, but the girls all got new outfits. I won't torture you with the exact details of everyone's outfits, but these are my memoirs so I will tell you about mine. It was an ice blue high low dress, the high just above my knees, the low trailing behind me. The sleeves were thick tank top sleeves, and there was a thick silver belt around the waist cinching it in. I had no jewelry or shoes, but I didn't need shoes. I preferred to be barefoot. My hair was in a ponytail. Simple and elegant. Perfect.

"We'd best get back to the hideout. We have to make sure Kida hasn't killed any of the Lost Boys yet," said Peter. "I quite like those boys."

I waved to Melody and we all ran back to the hideout. When we went back inside, Kida was tied up on the floor as the Lost Boys were painting on her. Peter sent the Lost Boys to their hammocks (because it was actually the middle of the night, 3:00 am) and we let her loose.

"Two days! They tied me up three minutes after you left and I've been on the floor for the full two days you were gone," said Kida, grabbing the front of Wendy's dress, shaking her as if to make her understand. "TWO FULL DAYS!"

"Okay! We're sorry! SOMEBODY had to watch them!" said Wendy.

"Yeah, but why me? Why not you?" questioned Kida.

I laughed and decided to leave while they were all distracted. I had only made it ten feet before I was picked up mysteriously for no reason. I almost screamed, but I didn't want to give whoever was picking me up the satisfaction of knowing that they were getting a reaction. Instead I crossed my arms and put a look of boredom on my face. Then a man in black robes stepped out from behind a tree. I couldn't see his face because his hood was covering it.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't Vanessa Frost. Fancy meeting you on Neverland. I didn't think that you would actually come here," said the guy in the robes.

"Yeah, fancy meeting me here. Come on, get on with it," I said, actually sounding bored.

"Get on with what?" he asked.

"What do you want? Are you going to rob me? Kidnap me? Hold me for ransom? Black mail me? Mug me? Threaten me? What's your deal?"

"My deal?"

"Yes! God, you're so dumb! What do you want?"

"Uh..." His resolve seemed to have wavered. His poise diminished until he was hunched over. His voice dwindled from brave to unsure.

"Come on, you have me held captive. Don't be freaked out by me right now. Give me your evil monologue, and then we can get back to me being intimidating."

"Oh, wellâ€¦Iâ€¦" He stood back up straight and cleared his throat. "You are Vanessa Frost, formerly Vanessa Clemens, daughter of Trisha and Bryce Clemens. Your mother married King Karter Kane. Your step sisters are Kirsty and Kayla Kane. They did not survive the hobogoblin war, and you really don't care. Your boyfriend is Jack Frost. You used to like Derek Simmons. You ran into the mist without a thought for him. You rescued him. He died. And now here you are."

"Done? Okay, would it make you feel like more of a success if I pretended I was scared?"

Instead of replying the way I was sure he was going to reply, he laughed. He laughed so hard he fell over and started rolling on the ground. That meant he couldn't have been much older than me, if not younger. When he stood back up, he pulled back his hood. I saw those big, round, grey eyes. That messy brown hair. That mouth that was normally smiling. I wasn't pretending when tears sprung to my eyes and my voice caught.

"Dâ€¦Derek? Butâ€¦butâ€¦I thought thatâ€¦ we all thought thatâ€¦" I couldn't finish.

"Yup, it's me. So, Vanessa. What have you been up to? I see that your hair is white. I see that your eyes aren't purple anymore. I see thatâ€¦"

"Why aren't you dead?"

"Straight to the point. Just the way that I remember you. I faked my death, obviously."

"Why Derek?"

"Because you broke my heart. I thought everything was fine between us. Until you came into that gazebo. All I wanted from you was for you to come with me to that dance. You didn't even let me finish the question. You stomped on my heart before I was even done offering it to you. Then I heard that you didn't even cry when you found out I was dead. You just drank root beer floats withâ€¦ with that _thing_. Then you moved on!"

"Derekâ€¦"

"Don't try to apologize! I don't want your sympathy. I only want one thing from you."

"What?"

"Come with me. Leave Jack and all your friends behind. I'll return your other friends and stop causing all that trouble. Like the hobogoblins."

The hobogoblin part set in.

"You sent the hobogoblins? Derek, almost all our friends died fighting them!"

"You mean _your_ friends? I had no friends! It was just _your_"

friends! I was angry. You don't think I felt bad when I went to go see all the graves on the mountain? You don't think I felt regret when I went to Mickey's castle and kidnapped my own _sister?_ I did! I always wondered how to make me watch, well, watch me now! Come with me and everything can go back to the way it was before you ran, before I supposedly died. Come with me!"

"Are you _insane?_ You think that you can just come up here and threaten me, blackmail me, leave me in tears and I would love you like I used to? It would take a long time for me to love you like that again. Just go Derek!"

"You won't come? Fine. But know this. Jack only managed to save the world with the help of a seven-year-old boy. That was five years ago. Go back and tell your precious Jack that I have Jamie. Tell him that!"

"Why Derek?"

"I told you why! You have six days to make your choice. You can only save one or the other. Your friends are in one place, Jamie is in the other. What are you willing to sacrifice to do the right thing? You have six days. That's ample time to make up your mind. Just know that we are still an option."

Derek vanished and I fell to the ground. I rushed back to the hideout and told everyone the story of what had just happened. Naturally, things did not go smoothly.

"We have to go save Jamie!" exclaimed Jack when I was finished.

"Are you crazy?! What's one boy against a whole bunch of people we grew up with? We have to rescue our friends!" insisted Rapunzel.

"I say she just goes with Derek," said Tink. Everyone quieted and stared at her. "What? It's the simplest option. He lets everyone go and then Vanessa could run away when he's asleep. She'd be gone before he'd ever know."

"NO! That would _never_ work!" yelled Jack. Tink drew back with a look of shock on her face. Then she burst into tears. Wendy rushed forward to hug her.

"Jack, what was that all about?" asked Wendy, sounding slightly angry.

"I'm sorry—it's just—look, I love Vanessa, and I love Jamie. I just want to keep everything right," apologized Jack.

"We can't save Jamie because that means all our friends remain prisoners," said Merida.

"Enough. Nobody's getting left behind, not on my watch. We have six days, we can figure something out," I replied. They all nodded in agreement. "Let's get planning."

Two days had passed and the only plans that we had come up with were the same three plans as before; we rescue our friends, we rescue Jamie, or I go with Derek. I couldn't bear to do either. I didn't want to break Jack's heart, so not rescuing Jamie and going with Derek were not options. I also didn't want to leave my friends at Derek's lack of mercy. They all looked to me for the answers. They all wanted me to be able to come up with a solution alone. Jack most of all. He was relying on me to be strong just because I was the Guardian of strength. Manny had fully explained my strength powers, and being able to solve everything by myself wasn't a part of them. I just induced strength, fun and wonder. He didn't understand any of that though.

Everyone was always asking me questions, fighting with each other and me. We weren't being very friendly anymore. Everything that we used to stand for fell apart as I watched. Not even slowly. One minute we were friends, the next minute we weren't. The only ones who remained unchanged were Terence and I. We hated the fighting, hated the arguing, and hated their behavior. Increasingly, we would spend some time together. We would go to the beach, go visit Atlantica and Ariel and Melody, and go ice skating, go stargazing. Once I even got to visit the Never Fairy realm. They were all amazing, and incredibly helpful towards stress relieving. Especially Silvermist. Terence and I remained friends through the fighting, through the stress, through the one fistfight Jack and Peter got into. Peter really put up a fight, but Merida knocked him out when he pulled his dagger.

"I just can't believe this! It's getting ridiculous. I thought I knew Jack, I thought all this great stuff about him, but it was all just a lie," I grumbled, sitting next to Terence on the blanket that we brought for our picnic.

"I know. I can't believe Peter would pull his knife though. Good thing Merida was there. He could have killed Jack!" said Terence, shock registering in his eyes.

"But that's okay because he didn't, though I don't see why they were making such a fuss over this. We have four days left. We can do this," I said, putting my hand on his shoulder. He smiled a weak smile. "Now, shall we get back to our picnic?"

He picked up his sandwich and took a bite. I ate some watermelon. We laughed. Being with Terence eased my mind for some reason. I couldn't laugh back at the hideout. We didn't have the breathing room down there to forgive each other. We just needed to spread out, just for a little while. I mean, what would just one day to breathe be when we had four? We didn't even need to hide out anymore. The pirates weren't after Peter anymore, not since I killed Hook. We could take a breather. I decided to tell Terence about it.

"Terence, we should take some time apart." He gave me a confused side glance, his mouth open with a sandwich hovering in front of it. "No, I don't mean we we. Just the others. Take a breather; spend some time alone to think."

"I'm afraid that's not going to be possible," said a growly voice from just inside the woods. "You have ten seconds to run in the direction of your choice. Then—well, my friends and I are hungry today. Be quick!"

We looked at each other and seemed to agree on something. We stood, took one step forward and jumped down the dead tree stump that led to the hide out. Terence grabbed onto the ladder and so did I. I slammed down the hatch and we climbed down. We arrived in the main quarters and everyone was exactly the way we left them, only this time they weren't screaming at each other, they were just sitting there giving each other dirty looks.

"Guys, we're under attack!" I yelled.

"By who?" asked Peter.

"I don't know, we're just under attack! Just prepare yourselves!" I squealed.

Everyone grabbed a sword.

"Hey, how did you find out we were under attack?" Jack asked me, holding his staff at the ready as we made our way to the tunnel.

"I was out on a picnic with Terence andâ€¦" I replied.

"Oh, I see. You were with Terence."

"Jack, it's nothing. Let's just fight!"

Jack hates that I spend as much time with Terence as I do. He gets all bitter and to the point whenever I as much as mention Terence's name. I swear he could be the Guardian of jealousy if that was a virtue that Manny wanted kids to have.

We burst out into the daylight and were completely surrounded by something. They were like leopards and wolves and people combined. They had arms like a person, but they were covered in thick fur, grey, brown, or black and had the ears of a wolf on top of their heads. But they had legs like a leopard. They could stand on them just fine. From the neck up, they had almost completely human heads, except for their ears and eyes. They shone and glimmered in a hundred different colors, yet were still white somehow. Some were girls, some were guys. They all wore Skyrim style armor and carried massive broadswords.

"Opalvirgins!" exclaimed Kida.

"What?" The word sounded so strange to me. I knew what an opal was and I knew what a virgin was, but not an opalvirgin.

"They only exist because a witch cursed a virgin a few hundred years ago. She stole a pair of the witch's opal earrings. The witch sent leopards and wolves after her. When they finally killed her, the witch decided that death was too good for the girl. So she fused together the girl, the leopard, the wolf, and the earrings and opalvirgins were the result. But that's not important right now, all that matters right at the moment," said Kida.

"You're telling me! Let's just kill these things already!" yelled Peter.

What I found the saddest of all was the simple fact that we were barely teenagers and we all killed in cold blood. It was like we had

a personal vendetta against each of the enemies we faced. A lot happened, I'm sure. I killed at least eighty opalvirgins. Everything was business as usual, until I heard a call for help. I turned around and there was Terence, pinned down on each limb by an opalvirgin. I ran to help but got caught up by another opalvirgin. I looked around, panic-stricken, for someone to help him. Everyone was fighting. Then Jack took one down. He was close enough to make it.

"Jack! Get Terence!" I called out. He looked at me, then to Terence, and went to fight another one. "JACK! GET TERENCE!"

He completely ignored me. I couldn't let my guard down for a second while fighting, but that wasn't the only reason I looked away from Terence. I heard him scream, I heard him grunt as a blade sliced his throat, then nothing but the malicious laughter of the opalvirgins as they left to find a new target. Just like that, Terence was gone. An anger I'd never felt before boiled inside me and I attacked so fiercely, none of the opalvirgins stood a chance. Soon they all lay dead on the grass and I stalked away from the carnage and gore towards a cliff. No, I wasn't going to jump to my death, I just needed some room. But of course, he had to follow me.

"Where are you going?" Jack called out to me.

"To do something fun!" I yelled in hatred.

"You can't do that!" said Jack as we finally got to the top.

"What does it matter to you if I have some fun for once?" I yelled.

"You know that's not our problem here Vanessa! We have only four days left to prepare! Did you forget about all of our friends who are being held captive?! We don't have time for detours!"

"You know what I think?! I think you're just jealous! You are so jealous, it's unbelievable! If I was going out and having fun with you, you wouldn't care!"

"Vanessa, just believe me! We don't have time for this!"

I scoffed. "You're asking me to believe in you?! After what you did?! Ha! As if!"

"What are you talking about?! What did I do to deserve all your hate?"

"You let him die, you asshole! I begged you to help him and you ignored me! You LET him die! You let him die because you were jealous that I was always doing things with him and not you! If you weren't always fighting just like everyone else, I would have! So if you want me to believe in you, looks like you're going to be disappointed, because I won't!"

"What are you saying?"

"We're DONE Jack! We are done! I will never believe in you again! As a matter of fact, you aren't even real to me anymore!"

As soon as the words left my mouth, Jack disappeared. I looked around

still angry. When I didn't see him, I grunted in disgust and flew off into the night. I flew back to the beach and just screamed and kicked the sand and hacked the crap out of the few palm trees that were there. When the fight had rushed out of me, I collapsed in the sand and cried. I cried for Terence then, not for leaving Jack. The two names together in my mind just got me angry all over again. I stood up and wiped my tears away angrily.

"Derek! I've decided!" I yelled out into the night. He appeared in front of me.

"What have youâ€|?" I didn't even let him finish. I put my hands on his shoulders and kissed him hard and angrily. Then I pulled away.

"Get me outta this hell hole now," I hissed. He seemed a bit shocked. He took my hand but the glassy look on his face remained. I snapped my fingers after waiting ten seconds for any sort of reaction. He shook his head and then he teleported us.

When we got to his fortress I let go of his hand and stared up at it in shock. It looked exactly like the Princess Academy. Walls made out of the same red bricks, roof made of the same black shingles, topiaries of crowns and books and quills exactly the same, there even appeared to be the same mysterious-looking yellow flowers in the garden. I craned my neck to get a better look. They were. The only difference was there was no sign or kids running around.

"Home is where the heart is, and my heart was at this school," said Derek.

"Why burn it down then?" I asked.

"I didn't burn it down. I sent the hobogoblins to the camp, not to the school. Those ones were rogue."

"Oh. Well, I'm here. Are you going to let our friends go?"

"Umâ€|Iâ€|can't."

"What?! Why not?"

"You see, they're being guarded by an army of opalvirgins."

"I'm not seeing a problem."

"They went rogue and are holding them for ransom."

"Ugh! Never mind, I could find a way around them. What about Jamie, same thing?"

"No. The most evil sorceress of all guards him."

"Can't you just tell her to back off? She didn't go rogue too, did she?"

"No. She's trapped inside a diamond, but her powers are still far beyond anyone else's."

"Then can't she just bust herself out?"

"No, she can't. I don't get it either."

"Great! Just perfect! Now what?!"

He walked me to the door and opened it up.

"How about we start with the tour?"

9. The Past Revealed

The tour was pretty much useless, because it was the exact same thing as the school. I'd already been given this tour, not that long ago, actually. He seemed insistent on showing me the barracks where his army lived for some reason.

"Well, I could go see it. Though the school didn't have a barracks," I finally agreed.

"It's not for the barracks themselves, there's someone here I'm sure you'll want to see," said Derek.

"If you say so."

The barracks weren't impressive from the outside, just what looked like your average bunker, but then I went inside. There was hundreds of pretty much anything you could imagine. Trolls, hobogoblins, opalvirgins, adults, teens, and tons of mages and others of the sort. Derek steered me over to the back of the bunker.

"I'd like you to meet General White. She keeps this place on its feet," said Derek. The girl was wearing armor and a helmet. She took the helmet off and smiled.

Her hair was black and mussed up. Her eyes were golden brown, kind of amberish. Her lips were red. Her skin was pale. Her feet were bare, oddly enough. Strapped to her back was a machine gun. She whistled and a squirrel came running out of nowhere. It scurried up her leg, over her armor, and up onto her shoulder.

"Status report?" she asked.

Derek didn't reply and she wasn't looking at me, she was asking the squirrel. It made a whole bunch of chattering noises.

"Good. Bring up the front by ten point two inches and hold that position as long as you can. I'll send the ravens as soon as possible. Go!" she said to the squirrel.

Something about this girl seemed really familiar. I put together the pieces I knew about her and she reminded me of Snow. I looked at her for so long that she looked over at me. She was taking me in as well; you could see it in the way her eyes swept over me. Then she broke out into a smile, which seemed odd to me, considering the fact that she could've gutted me in three seconds flat. Then she hugged me and I just stared off into the distance in shock.

"What?" I finally said.

"I thought you died!" said General White.

"And you are?" I asked.

"Oh, right! I'm Snow White. I'm okay! I know you thought I died and to be honest I thought I was going to die when I went flying too. But I landed on a big patch of bog moss."

"Oh my god!" I exclaimed as I hugged her back. She was okay after all. "Wait, why are you here?"

"I landed just outside the barracks. Camp's not that far away from here. I still go there sometimes."

"Well, we've had some interesting experiences since then."

"We?"

"Yeah, Jack, Merida, Rapunzel, and Kida. We all went to Neverland and we're with Peter and Wendy and the Lost Boys. There were also these two fairies, but—" I couldn't bring myself to talk about Terence again yet. I cleared my throat to get rid of the lump forming inside of it and went on. "We also helped Ariel with the Bubble Ball. By the way, Ariel is the Queen now and Melody is the heir to Atlantica."

"Awww, I missed the Bubble Ball? But you guys all went? Not fair!"

"Okay, you are really messing with my head right now. You look like you want to gut me and sometimes you talk like it too, but then you just act exactly the way you were before, all happy and pouty, like a normal princess. It's giving me a headache."

She laughed and asked Derek what I was doing here. His face turned beet red and he looked around nervously.

"Oh, my God! Do I have to do everything around here too? He came to Neverland one day and offered me a choice. He kidnapped all the princesses from Mickey's castle and also the kid who helped Jack save the world, Jamie. He told me he'd let them go if I came with him, that, or I could come rescue one or the other."

"But why did you choose Derek? Aren't you with Jack?"

"Not anymore. We weren't doing so well because everyone started to argue about who should be saved. I spent a lot of time with one of the fairies. His name was Terence. I didn't have a crush on him or anything; he was just the only one who wasn't pressuring me to choose. We were on a picnic and then an opalvirgin came and told us we had ten seconds to run. We went back into the hideout and then we fought with them. Terence was in trouble, but I couldn't get to him. Jack could have saved him, but he just ignored Terence and kept fighting. Terence—" My voice broke. "They killed him. Then when I wanted to get some space, Jack told me that I couldn't, that I had to stay focused and choose. I got mad. Then he just disappeared. So I came here, and that's the end of it."

"Aren't you going to let them out?" Snow asked Derek.

"Well, I no longer have control or power over the opalvirgins who guarded our friends and my sister, but we could go free Jamie," said Derek.

"No. Not all of you. I'll go. Alone," I said. Derek shrugged but Snow gasped.

"Why would you go without me?" she demanded.

"Can you fly?" I asked. No response. "Do you know any spells that would make you fly?" No response. "Then the answer is no."

"I don't need magic. Not when I have a griffin." She opened a window and whistled out it. I heard a sound between a roar and the cry of an eagle. Then a heavy thud as something landed just outside the barracks. "Meet Danzi." She waved me over and moved so I could look out the window at the griffin. It had the front body of an eagle right up to about its waist. Its feathers were brown. Its front feet were talons like an eagle's talons. Its wings were right on its shoulders. From the waist down it was a lion, complete with the tail and everything. It was massive, but its head still twitched and turned like a normal bird's would.

"Well then, where is Jamie anyways?" I asked Derek.

"Just south of the ruins of the old school. You can't miss it, it's the biggest thing there, taller than every other tree, and the roof of it is neon yellow," said Derek.

"Uh," I said, "why?"

"So I could find it from the air. You can't see it from here, but it's not that far away from the barracks. Only about two, three miles past the school."

"And where's that?"

"I said you'll see it!"

"Jeez! Fine, I guess we'd better leave then. We'll be back with Jamie."

Snow and I went out into the clearing where her griffin Danzi was waiting. It was nervous about my approaching it, but Snow calmed it down quickly. She scratched under its chin and said one single word that I couldn't understand and just like that, it stopped making that weird screech roaring sound and standing on its hind paws in anxiety.

"So, will you ride with me, or will you fly?" asked Snow.

"I think I'll fly. Jamie will be used to flying people with white hair. Griffins though? I don't think he'd think we were coming to rescue him."

So without any real plan, Snow climbed onto Danzi and they took to the sky. I came up seconds later. While we flew, I asked Snow why she was working with Derek.

"I was glad to see him again. I mean, not because I like him or anything, just because he promised me I could fight. I could finally fight, like I was meant to. He made me his General and I met Danzi here just last week. Why? Do you think I shouldn't be fighting for him?"

"No, that's not it, I just wondered. Isn't he supposed to be evil?"

"Derek? Evil? No! Justâ€¦misguided. I keep telling him not to trust him, but he doesn't listen to me. I'll wager the kidnappings weren't his idea at all. Derek doesn't like hurting people. He's not evil, but sometimesâ€¦sometimes he takes over Derek to do the things he knows Derek would never do."

"What? Someone possesses Derek? Who?"

"I can't tell you. I promised Derek I wouldn't tell anyone who it was. Honestly he scares me so much I don't want to mention his name at all."

I dropped it. We flew past the camp, past the school and finally arrived at the tower. The roof really was neon yellow. Something in front of it made me land. It was what looked like a massive piece of crystal or something else clear. When I was in front of it, I saw a blur of brown and crÃƒme and russet through the stone. Danzi and Snow landed next to me before I could register what it was.

"What is that?" asked Snow, voicing my own question.

"I have absolutely no idea. Come on, Jamie's waiting."

We went up to the doors and were about to yank them open when we both fell to the ground. My head was pounding all of a sudden and it was too painful to keep my eyes open. Then the pain was gone. I stood up and I wasn't there anymore. I stood up and slid a bit. I looked down and saw that I was on ice. That was weird. I never slipped on ice. It was night. I looked up and saw the moon.

_Vanessa, I saved you great pain and suffering in the future, but now I'm forced to make you feel great pain and suffering in the past, _ said Manny. _Vanessa, you have a story far bigger than just you. I brought you here to show you a small piece of the suffering you'll feel increasingly the more time you spend away from Jack._

_ Manny, no offense, but being with Jack hurt. He let Terence die! I'm supposed to stay with someone who lets their jealousy go that far?_

_ He did it foolishly of course. But you should be strong. Strong enough to forgive and forget. Keep that in mind while you watch this._

I of course had no idea what he was talking about. Then I saw a girl and a boy come through the woods. Her eyes were pale violet. Her hair was strawberry blond and waist length. Neither looked much older than fourteen. She laughed and looked up at the boy she was holding hands with. His hair was brown and spiky. His eyes were a matching brown. He laughed along with her. They were dressed very strangely. The girl

was wearing a dark brown dress with long sleeves, and at the hem was a red diamond pattern. He was wearing brown pants that went just above his ankles. His shirt was cream colored with puffed sleeves and there was a small dark brown vest over it. Over that he wore a brown cloak. The bottom layer of it went to his waist; the top layer of it went down just past his shoulders. They were talking about the girl's birthday. Their voices were both familiar and their laughs were too. Then I realized that this was me and Jack. But I'd never seen him in that shirt and I'd never worn that outfit.

Manny, what is this? I asked Manny. _When was this?_

_ Long ago, back when you met for the very first time._

_ That was at school. _

_ No, it wasn't. You met long ago, back before Jackson Overland became Jack Frost._

_ Overland? Is that his real last name? _

_ Vanessa, take this seriously!_

By the looks of things, they couldn't see or hear me. So I got a closer look.

"Here. I carved this for you," said Jack. He handed the other me a comb. It was an off-white comb.

"Ivory?! Jack, you didn't have to!" Jack held up his hand.

"I bought a deer horn from the butcher. I've been carving it for a while, but I had to get you this for your birthday this year. That's not all I got you though."

"Jack, the horn alone must have cost you at least three nickels. I couldn't accept another gift from you."

"This one you'll need." He sat on a tree stump and patted one next to him. Other me got a concerned look on her face and sat. "Vanessa, I've known you since I was a child. You're my best and closest friend. Bitsy loves you. My mother adores you. You've enchanted my whole family."

"My parents adore you too Jack," Other me said with a laugh. He reached out for her hand and she grabbed it. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing's really the matter," he said, staring at his bare toes. Then he met Other me's eyes. "Vanessa, I love you." Other me seemed in complete shock, like he'd never said that to her before. "I've loved you ever since we were six. And now that we're both fourteen, I love you so much; I want to keep you with me forever. I guess what I'm really trying to say is—" He reached into his pocket and pulled out something small and circular and gold with a little sparkling jewel on it. "Vanessa, say yes. Say you'll marry me. Say you want to be my wife."

Other Me just kept looking from Jack's eyes to the ring, the ring to Jack's eyes. She opened her mouth to say something at least a dozen

times, but she kept closing it again. Tears welled up in her eyes like she felt the same and wanted to say yes, but the words escaped her. Finally she started to laugh.

"What? What is it?" asked Jack.

"Nothing, nothing. Yes, Jack, I will marry you."

They kissed and walked off back the way they came.

"I'm taking Bitsy ice skating tomorrow to tell her the good news. Do you want to come?" asked Jack.

"No, I have a family reunion tomorrow. I'll see her when it's over though," said Other Me as they vanished into the foliage.

I stood there, alone and cold and confused. What? What on Earth had just happened? Jack and I were here together. He proposed to me. How come I didn't remember any of this? I had a family reunion tomorrow. Jack was taking his little sister Bitsy ice skating tomorrow and I wasn't coming with them. Then it hit me. Jack. Bitsy. Ice skating. Jack died while ice skating with his sister. I wasn't there, but I would be mourning for him. How? When? What?

Manny, what does that mean? When were Jack and I going to get married? How did I meet him here? How did I meet him now? I wasn't alive yet!

Keep watching. It's not yet over.

Of course it isn't. What else are you going to show me?

The trees and snow and ice melted away and I was standing next to Other Me. She was standing in front of a window in what appeared to be her room. This was clearly the following night, because there were tears in my eyes. They were old tears. Other Me had already grieved and mourned enough. Now she was just looking to the heavens to ask why. Why Jack? Why before they could be together? Why did her family reunion have to be the day Jack died and could have been saved had she been there? She was lost and scared and helpless and hopeless. She was desperate for answers. I could relate fully, mostly because we were the same person.

Then Other Me froze. We both heard a laugh outside the window. She peered around, wondering who would dare to trick her. I could see him too. He was clearly Jack Frost now. He was carrying that staff and his hair was white. She raised an eyebrow and called out his name. Before he could see where the voice was coming from, Other Me looked down at her ring. The diamond on it was growing up and around her finger. She stared at it in shock. It went on to envelop her other fingers, her hand, up her arm, down her sides and stomach, over her legs. Then she screamed. Before the sound could make it to Jack, the diamond grew from her stomach to her neck and covered her head, hair and all. I gasped in shock. It wasn't done growing yet. It grew and grew until it was a circle with a flat base.

Manny, what the hell just happened? What is going on?

Watch and learn.

Other Me vanished suddenly. I was left alone in the room. Then I heard Manny tell Jack what his name was, Jack Frost.

I took you up to me for safeguarding. Your mother as well. I needed you for Jack. Jack would save the world once with Jamie, and another time with you, after the first time. Jamie wouldn't be born for many centuries, so I needed you to stay alive for that long and longer. Do you remember much of your childhood?

I wanted to say yes, but I knew that I couldn't. I remembered only being fourteen. I was fourteen in Canada, I was fourteen when Mom and I went to Italy, I was fourteen when I went to the school, and I was fourteen when I met Jack. Then I realized that yesterday in my past must have been my fourteenth birthday.

Butâ€|butâ€|Iâ€| I wanted to protest but I couldn't. I should be dead already. I shouldn't still be alive. I should have died here, in this time, in this village, alone and sad and afraid for the rest of my life. But I would have no end now, if I was careful. _Manny, a headache is better than this. Take me back._

My eyes opened and I saw the face of a worried boy. His eyes were brown, and so was his hair. He looked relieved to see that I was still alive.

"Jamie?" I managed to moan out.

"Hi," was the only thing he could think to say.

"How did we get inside?"

"I don't know. You two just appeared in the room. You look like Jack."

"I should. My name is Vanessa. I'mâ€|well, I _used to be _Jack's girlfriend."

"What's her name? And where's Jack?"

"Her name is Snow White, and I think Jack's still on Neverland."

"Well, you're lucky you woke up so soon. You two were only outside my window unconscious for two days."

"_TWO DAYS?_ That's not long?"

He shook his head. "I was out for four days once when I tried to escape. I've been trapped here for a month."

I looked around. The room was a plain white circular room with one window with chicken wire embedded in it. There was a bed, a toilet and a fridge sitting against the back wall. I hugged Jamie. I was relieved that he was okay, and in one piece. At least Jack's efforts weren't in vain.

"I wouldn't be worried about me. I'd be worried about Thimble," said Jamie, hugging me back. "She's trapped in there and they all think that she murdered her whole family."

"Thimble? Who? Where? What?" I asked. I put my hands on his shoulders and held him at arm's length.

"Thimble. She's inside the diamond outside. She talks to me. She has powerful magic, but she would never hurt a fly. She was framed. She only hurts people because he promised her that if she did, he'd let her out. He won't really though. He's using her like he's using the other guy, Derek."

"We'll sort all this out later, but for now, we have to figure out how to get out," I said, looking around in panic. The way it looked, there _was _no way out.

10. Thimble

I stood up and looked around the room frantically. There was only one escape route that was vaguely possible, and that was the window. How could we get through the chicken wire though? Snow's eyelashes fluttered and she opened her eyes. She sat up and looked around in shock.

"Uh, I don't mean to bug you guys, but why are we here?" she asked.

"We just appeared in here and now we're all trapped," I replied.

"Window got chicken wire in it?" she asked. We nodded. "Not a problem."

She stood and went to the window. She motioned for us to stand back. We slammed against the opposite wall, just in case. She did exactly what I thought she was going to do. She unstrapped the machine gun from her back and blasted the glass almost halfway to camp. The chicken wire? It didn't stand a chance. It went flying with the glass.

"Like I said, not a problem. Let's go, and watch out for glass."

Jamie got up and followed her down the side of the tower eagerly. I was slower because I was thinking about what Manny had shown me. Why did he hate me all of a sudden? Was it because I left Jack? Manny couldn't manipulate me into going back to him. I wasn't ready to forgive him. I was strong enough to know that, if anything. I followed Snow and Jamie down to the diamond where this Thimble girl was supposed to be trapped. Now that I thought about it, it did look like there was a girl in it. The brown and crÃ"me were her clothes, the russet was her hair. Even the form of the colors looked like a girl. I tensed suddenly. The hair on the back of my neck stood up, as though someone was behind me. I turned and looked. There was nothing. Then I heard the voice of an Australian girl in my head.

Come on, I'm not stupid! I know you were inside diamond too. How did you get out?

_ Ummâ€¦I have no idea. And who are you?_

_ I'm Princess Thimble of the third district. I've been framed and

trapped here. Help me, please, and I can give you anything you'd like._

_ How am I supposed to get you out?_

_ Don't you think that if I knew how to get out of here, that I would have a long time ago? I can do magic! I'm talking to you from inside a freaking diamond! You don't think that I could get out of here if I knew how? Come on; just give a jackal a hand!_

_ Okay, one question first. When exactly did you lose your mind?_

_ Three months ago. I woke up married to a pineapple. An _ugly
pineapple. But I loved it anyways.

_ Oooooo-kay then. Let me think for a minute._

_ I'm not going anywhere!_

I wanted to help her; I just didn't know how to get her out. How had Manny gotten me out? Willpower? If that was all that you needed to have, she wouldn't be in there still. I reached out and touched the diamond. I focused on the image of a girl standing in front of me. The diamond froze. I focused even more. Chunks of the diamond fell off, some small; some so large Jamie and Snow ran for cover. Then it was stripped down to a girl.

Her skin was pale, but that was understandable considering the fact that she'd been inside a diamond for god only knows how long. Her hair was the source of the russet. It was up in a high ponytail, held up by what looked like a little belt with a gold buckle. Her hair couldn't have been very long, because the ponytail didn't go very far down her neck. It was pretty messy, with lots of wisps of hair all over the place. Her eyes were emerald green, like Rapunzel's. Resting just on her forehead was a pair of goggles with green lenses that matched her eyes. They went over in either direction and there was this weird circle thing covered in gears over her ears. Her shirt was cream colored and long-sleeved, with a collar. She wore a brown vest over the shirt that was held together with three brass buttons. She had a shoulder pad over her left shoulder and a knife strapped to her arm just below that. She wore a belt with her shirt tucked into it. It flowed down farther in the back than in the front. She had another belt that hung down her side, covered in pouches and a set of keys. She had on really short shorts, brown and with two sets of zippers, one on either leg. On her right leg, she had a sort of strap thing from the hem of the leg down to just above her knee. There were two more pouches on that. Then her boots—they went up to just below her knee and they were really strange looking. They had pipes and gears and strips of leather and buckles. I couldn't imagine how she could walk with that much metal on her feet. The whole style of her outfit just shocked me.

She ran over to me and threw her arms around me.

"Thank you so much! I can't believe it! Who would toss a twelve year old princess into a diamond because they think she murdered her family? Why would I murder my—" she trailed off. She let go of me and walked slowly toward Jamie, as if in a trance. She reached her hand out to him. "Hi. My name's Thimble." She sounded like and moved as if she were a robot.

"I know. You talked to me before," he replied, shaking her hand.

"Oh! Right! Haâ€|" I suddenly understood her weird behavior. She had a crush on Jamie! It sounded so weird that I laughed. Thimble waved her hand at me, with her eyes still fixed on Jamie, and my lips were instantly stuck together. "Soâ€|what brings you here?"

"Uhâ€|I already told you. Remember?" asked Jamie.

"Jamie, she has a crush on you!" I blurted. Thimble turned around and smacked me across the face so hard, I'd have a red mark on it until I was two thousand and some.

"I may not have murdered my family, but do I look like I wouldn't hurt someone if they annoyed me?" I shook my head because she really didn't. If you looked past the fact that she was really short and tiny, then she looked deadly serious. "Good, so we understand each other."

She was crazy and demented and giggly and flirty and nervous all at the same time. It almost gave me another headache. Snow came over to me and watched with the same look on her face as I had a look that said, "Whaaaaaaaaaat?" Jamie laughed at something Thimble said, but all I saw was Jack and I when we met at the school. Laughing and flirting, all though he hadn't meant to fall in love with me nor me with him, Manny was doing some love guru work behind our back. I understood why now, because we had to be in love, but neither of us remembered when we were in love. It was a complicated relationship and now he'd never know that we were engaged once. I looked down at my left hand instinctively. I gasped in shock, because on my ring finger was the ring that Jack had given me all that time ago. I didn't even remember ever wearing it. What was it doing there all of a sudden? I tugged on it, trying to get it off, but it wouldn't budge. I tugged harder. Nothing. By then I knew it had to be Manny doing this, for some odd reason.

Really Manny? Seriously? This what you've come to? Forcing me to wear his engagement ring? Of all the weird things that have been done to me, this takes the cake. Not even dying and being resurrected was this weird!

You are his forever, whether together or apart. The ring is just there to remind you of that. You are supposed to be together, so if you won't go back to him on your own, then I'll be forced to make your life so terrible, you'll beg me to give you Jack. That's only if you start to be romantically involved with that Derek boy.

_You are twisted and evil. How can you protect children? You don't seem like someone who would. _

I am protecting you. Just not in the way that you could imagine. I must go. I have to remind Jack what's important. Until tomorrow evening, Miss Frost. Just make sure you take Thimble with you. She's more valuable than she seems.

His voice stopped. So, now I had a ring stuck on my finger and a promise that if I started to like Derek again, I would be very miserable. Unfair. Thimble and Jamie came over to us holding hands.

Thimble was fast and good, if she could get to hand holding in twelve minutes flat.

"So, the next part of the plan, what is it?" asked Jamie.

"Well, I was thinking that we could stop him," said Snow.

"Stop who, Derek?" I asked.

"No, not Derek. _Him._ He just wants to make another comeback. He's going to use Derek this time because he Guardians won't hurt him if he's inside Derek, because they can't hurt kids, no matter what," said Snow.

"Wait. Another comeback? The Guardians? Hold on—|is it—|is it Pitch?" asked Thimble.

"Yes—|how—|how did you know that?" asked Snow.

"I know everything," said Thimble.

"That's awfully arrogant of you," said Jamie.

"No, I really do. The fairies of the Steampunk district blessed me to know everything. Oh, and Vanessa? Manny's right. You and Jack belong together. That's why you need the ring, to remind you of that. Jamie, Sophie's okay. They didn't hurt her. She's safe at home. Snow White, you're going to get the fight of your life soon, and it will be the most fun you've ever had. Unfortunately, if Jack's not there, we'll all die."

11. Remembering

Thimble and Jamie rode back to the barracks with Snow on Danzi. I flew. Thimble blew my mind. She knew everything? Then—|did she know if I was stupid for letting Jack go? I didn't want to ask her. The answer might be yes. When we got back to the barracks and explained everything to Derek, he started talking to himself. One voice was his, but the other was that of a much older man, perhaps twenty some years older. They weren't speaking in English, so I couldn't understand. Only once did I understand, when the older man said "I just want my daughter back." I didn't understand why I suddenly understood. It confused me. Snow walked quietly back to her tasks and I took Thimble and Jamie up to the school.

"There used to be another place that looked exactly like this one, but it was burned down while we were at camp," I said, although I didn't need to explain to Thimble. She knew everything, apparently. Probably not literally everything. Maybe just _nearly_ everything.

"So, Vanessa. What do you do?" asked Jamie.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Jack can make snow. What can you do?"

"Oh, I can do that too. But I also have this other thing with sparkles. Watch." I concentrated on the image of thousands of golden

sparkles all over the place and they appeared. I gathered them up and made something that just popped into my head. A sled. Jamie saw it and his eyes lit up.

"Whoa, a sled! How did you know I missed having one of these?" asked Jamie in amazement as I handed it to him.

"I don't know. I think North can do the same thing."

"Who's North?"

"You call him Santa Claus. We Guardians call him North."

"You're a Guardian? What do you do?"

"I'm the Guardian of Strength, according to Manny."

"Who'sâ€|?" Thimble didn't let him finish.

"He's the man in the moon. Now, if you'll excuse us Vanessa, I already know which rooms you were going to lead us to. I'll see you again in exactly five minutes and seventeen seconds." She took Jamie's hand and they walked off.

"I'll be counting each second!" I called at their retreating backs.

"No you won't be! You're going to go get changed and almost be late!" said Thimble. They rounded a corner and were gone.

I looked down at my dress and realized I did need to change. The dress was stained with dirt and sweat and food and blood, it was full of holes and tears. My hair must have been a rat's nest. I found a room with a sign on the door. The sign said Vanessa so I assumed I was the right Vanessa and went inside.

Inside, it looked exactly like my dorm room back at the school, even the triple layer bunk beds. How he'd managed to get every detail right when he'd never been inside the room before, I'll never understand. I suppose it's better if I didn't. I opened the closet and enough dresses to suffocate a llama were inside. Why suffocate a llama? I don't know. I didn't feel like wearing a dress right now. I opened the drawers on the dresser. I sighed in relief because there were shirts and pants inside. I grabbed the first shirt I touched and did the same with the pants. The shirt was a black v-neck and the pants were desert camouflage. I hated them instantly and immediately put on another pair of pants. Jeans. They were surprisingly comfy. I reached into the bottom of the closet and blindly reached for a pair of shoes. It took me about five minutes to find a pair of shoes I liked, black flats with light blue toes. Then a cold wind blew through the place and I shivered. I looked under the bottom bunk, where we kept the sweaters and grabbed the thing on the top. I slid it on without looking, grabbed a comb, and started running it through my hair frantically as I ran into the hall. I made it there just before Thimble and Jamie came in. Jamie was in fresh clothes, however, Thimble was not.

"See, I told you you'd almost be late. Am I ever wrong?" asked Thimble.

"Don't be an ass about it. Now, can I just finish combing my hair?" I asked.

"By all means, continue. Ivory gets the tangles right out," said Thimble.

I stopped combing my hair. I moved the comb slowly into my line of vision and saw that it was off-white and had been carefully carved by hand. I moved my hand away from the handle and I saw the word Vanessa carved into it. It was the comb Jack gave me a lifetime ago.

"That must have been a very expensive birthday present. Second only to that pretty little ring on your left hand. Did Jackâ€|?" I didn't let her finish.

"_Don't even_ mention him right now. I know in your little eyes you think that you know everything, well, you don't understand anything, you little punk!" I exclaimed. I didn't know why I was so angry at her. It wasn't her fault I had the comb and it wasn't her fault the ring was stuck on my finger. I just didn't like her attitude.

"Okay, okay! Fine! If it upsets you, then I won't!"

"Guys, please! Stop fighting! Thimble, can you at least pretend that you don't know what everything is all about? For me?" pleaded Jamie. Thimble glared at me one last time with eyes that said "I either trust you, or I don't. I'm just not sure which yet. So watch your back until I figure it out." Then she went over to Jamie. "Okay. Oh and Vanessa? If mentioning Jack gets you so upset, then why are you wearing a sweater just like his?"

I looked down and sure enough the sweater I had put on was a dark blue drawstring hooded sweater. I just groaned and stuffed the comb in the front pocket. I stalked away to the front doors. I was so ticked; I blew them open with a giant gust of freezing wind. I walked and walked and walked until I got to the edge of a lake. I crossed my fingers and hoped that this wasn't the same lake. All my hopes were shattered when I saw the campgrounds across the lake. I was so livid; I curled my hands into fists and screamed, long and loud. Then I turned around and punched a tree. It hurt, as you would imagine. I collapsed into a ball and held it. Now I was mad at the tree. What the heck was wrong with me? I was angry at everyone, but for what? What had Thimble done to me? What had that tree done to me? What had Manny done to me? What had Jack done to me? Nothing that I hadn't deserved.

"But Terence didn't have to die because of me," I muttered. I stood up, reached into the hoodie pocket and closed my fist around the comb. I pulled my arm back and whipped it into the lake. I felt surprisingly better, for some weird reason.

I took in the landscape around me. The tall trees whose leaves shaded my eyes from the afternoon sun. The clear blue lake. The ferns and bushes. The camp in the distance. Then I sat back down and breathed in the clean air. I remembered the hobogoblin war. Derek had caused it. Jack and I had won it. I took off the sweater and set it down on the ground. I plunked my head down on it and got a good jab from something. I checked the pocket and pulled out my ivory comb. I was going to toss it back into the lake, but I stopped myself. I leaned back onto the sweater and wondered how the comb had come back.

Probably Manny. I closed my eyes and let my mind wander.

My mind is a recognized traitor, and therefore wandered to memories of Jack. His first day at the school. When I kissed him for the first time. When he showed me how he became Jack Frost. When we kissed the other time and Rapunzel ran away. When we went to the dance together. When we drank root beer floats together. When he saved me from the hobogoblin. When we rode on the bus together to camp. When I fell through the ice. When he saw me as Vanessa Frost. When I kissed him right before I fought the hobogoblins. Pretty soon my mind just wandered to every single time we'd ever kissed. The last image I saw before I passed out was of him and me kissing in those woods in the dark of night, while the moonlight made the ring on my finger sparkle and glisten. My fingers curled even tighter around the comb as I fell into a dark, dreamless sleep.

End
file.